Cultural Intersections

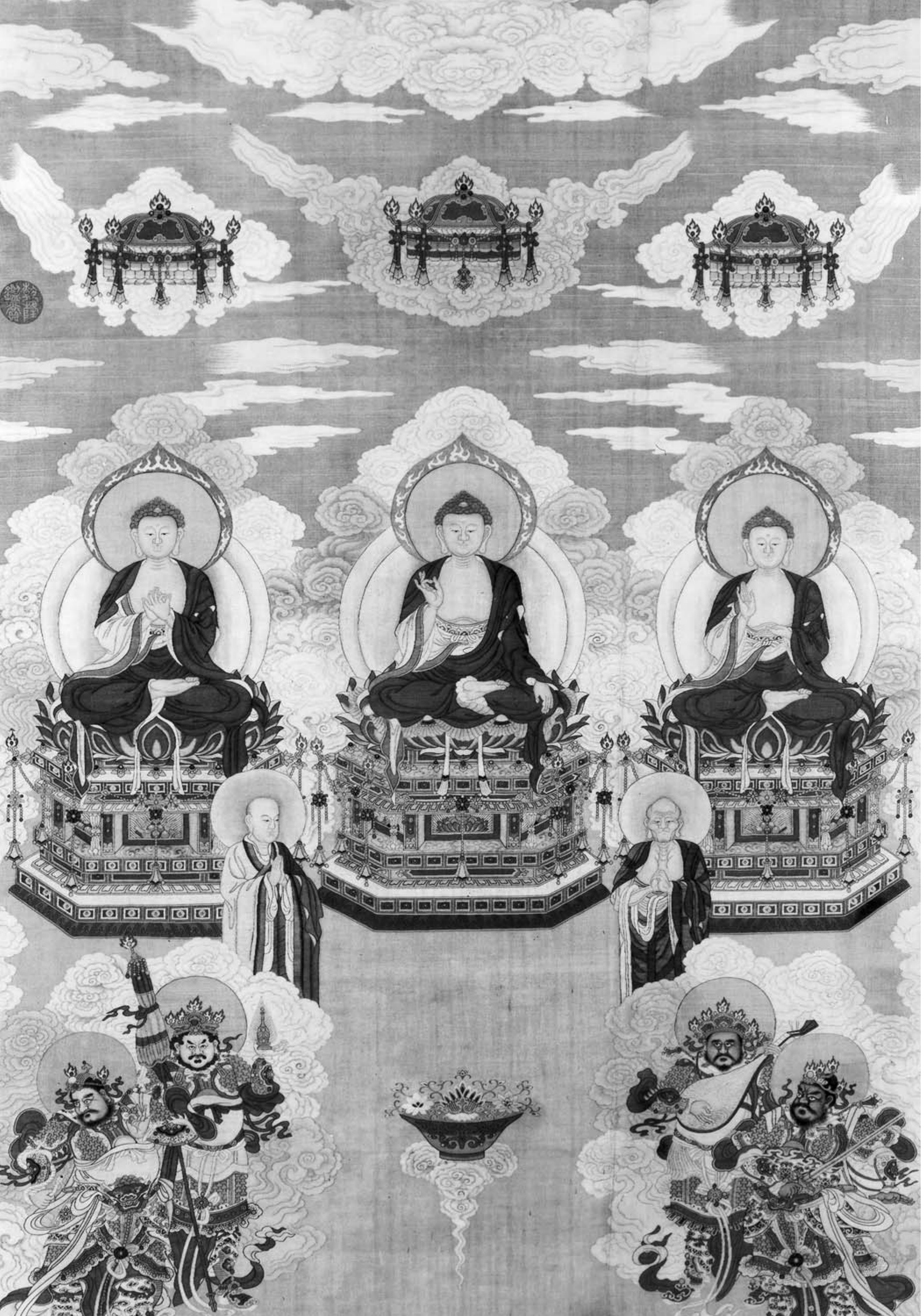
IN LATER CHINESE BUDDHISM



Edited by

MARSHA WEIDNER

Cultural Intersections in Later Chinese Buddhism



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Contents

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I am grateful to all of the participants in that program for providing two days of stimulating papers and provocative discussion, but especially to T. Griffith Foulk, Terese Tse Bartholomew, Patricia Berger, Amy McNair, and Daniel B. Stevenson for turning their papers into chapters for this book. I am equally grateful to Beata Grant and Kenneth J. Hammond for responding to my call for studies to extend the range of the book, while giving it even greater depth. These individuals deserve credit not only for their scholarship, but also for their patience (as the date 1994 should suggest). This book has taken longer to produce than would have been ideal, but the scholarship it contains is no less timely for the delay. I hope readers will all agree that the final product was worth the wait.

The many illustrations included here were made possible, in part, by a subvention from the University of Kansas Hall Center for the Humanities and Center for Research. Significant assistance with the glossary was provided by Wang Hui, who is currently a doctoral student at the University of Kansas. Finally, on behalf of all the contributors to this book, I sincerely thank Patricia Crosby, executive editor, our copy editor, Joanne Sandstrom, and many others at the University of Hawai'i Press, not only for their work on this project, but more importantly for their continuing commitment to scholarship in the field of East Asian studies.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural Intersections in Later Chinese Buddhism

Marsha Weidner

HISTORIES BASED ON canonical texts, biographies of great masters, and institutional records provide only a partial account of Buddhism in China. Likewise, the place of Buddhism in Chinese aesthetic life is much more complex than suggested by the selection of Buddhist objects and sites described in mainstream art historical scholarship. In historical and art historical accounts alike, traditional Chinese and Western notions of authoritative sources and subjects worthy of study have limited our perceptions of Chinese Buddhism. These views have also been truncated chronologically. Contrary to the impression given by much traditional scholarship, the story of Buddhism in China does not end with the so-called golden age in the Tang dynasty (618–907) or even with Chan (Zen) Buddhism in the Song (960–1279). The last chapters have yet to be written. In spite of the wholesale Maoist secularization of Chinese society in the midtwentieth century, Buddhism is growing on Chinese soil once again.

Twenty years ago the foregoing statements would have been deemed eccentric in scholarly circles. Scholars generally agreed that Chinese Buddhism and its art peaked in the Tang dynasty and then steadily declined, reaching a truly deplorable state by the Ming (1368–1644). This judgment was not based on demographics, for the faith continued to grow in popularity and insinuate itself ever more thoroughly into Chinese culture after the Tang, but on a perceived decline in Buddhist leadership, spiritual purity, and intellectual rigor. Further evidence was found in the art historical canon created by Ming- and Qing-dynasty (1644–1912) connoisseurs, which renders post-Tang religious art nearly invisible.

Such notions about the institutional contours and canonical landmarks of the Chinese Buddhist landscape are still found in introductory and survey texts, as if written in stone. But erosion is well under way. Historians of religion and, more recently, art historians have begun to let go of the biological model of birth, florescence, and decay and to evaluate later Chinese Buddhism on its own terms, not necessarily regarding it as better or worse than what went before, but as something distinct that invites different modes of research and analysis.[1] More catholic, interdisciplinary, culture-based approaches to "later" Chinese Buddhism have begun to provide critical counterpoints to the older, institutionalized narratives derived from official sources and elite perspectives.

The essays in this book demonstrate the possibilities of such approaches. These studies are unified, in part, by what they do not address, namely, the bedrock subjects of traditional Buddhist historiography: scriptures and commentaries, sectarian developments, and the lives of notable monks. The authors examine instead a wide range of extracanonical materials to illuminate specific cultural manifestations of Buddhism from the Song dynasty through the modern period. In straying from well-trodden paths, the authors often transgress the boundaries of their own disciplines. Historians address art and architecture. Art historians look to politics. A specialist in literature treats poetry that offers gendered insights into Buddhist lives. Investigations of painting, calligraphy, architecture, and literature mingle with examinations of religious ritual and political patronage. Some of the essays explore constructions of power through art and ritual in ways that resonate with work in the area of cultural studies. In sum, the broad-based cultural orientation of this volume is predicated on the recognition that art and religion are not closed systems requiring only minimal cross-indexing with other social or aesthetic phenomena, but constituent elements in interlocking networks of practice and belief.

Culture, variously defined, links these essays. It is an umbrella under which to gather studies of subjects traditionally excluded from the diachronic official histories of Buddhism in China based on sources vetted by the Chinese church, state, and social elite. But more important, a broad definition of culture allows us to juxtapose subjects that might otherwise be treated in discipline-specific journals or anthologies, where their intersections with other aspects of Buddhist culture might easily be missed. Failure to appreciate these many connections has contributed to our blindness to the pervasiveness of Buddhism in later Chinese culture, not just as a system of belief, but also as a vehicle for expression and enrichment of everyday life. Arguably, the real strength of later Chinese Buddhism lies in its thoroughgoing penetration of Chinese life on all levels. Thousands of Buddhist monasteries all across China were nuclei of faith and culture. Men and women of all walks of life and many nationalities passed through their gates. In the shaping of Chinese culture broadly, they were at least as important as the court and its bureaucracy and the scholars' studios where elite culture was crafted and packaged.

We are using the term "culture" in its sociological and humanistic senses, to refer both to entire ways of life and to those intellectual and artistic activities that raise life above the subsistence level. Moreover, with regard to the first definition, we recognize many ways of life, a multiplicity of historically and socially specific cultures that touch, intersect, and overlap in time and space. Some, such as that of the scholar-official class, are widespread and enduring, though by no means unchanging. Others are limited or transitory, such as temporary cultures created by mortuary rituals or annual celebrations. Interactions between some cultures involve dominance and subordination. Class, ethnicity, and gender combine with factors such as regionalism, sectarianism (for instance, Chan versus Pure Land), and forms of religious commitment (monastic versus lay) to create countless microcultures and a shifting array of relationships. Thus it is possible to speak of the Buddhist cultures of particular locales, monasteries, events, or social groups and of the cultural imperatives of these places, institutions, and people given concrete expression in architecture, images, calligraphy, poetry, and ritual performance.

The eight essays range broadly over this terrain, examining the functions of art in the cultural space of the monastery, temporary cultures created by ritual performance, the cultural

sphere allotted to and re-created by Buddhist nuns, tensions between Confucian and Buddhist cultures manifested in the critical reception of art, monasteries as disseminators of court culture, Buddhist culture as an arena for international exchange, and the changing political culture of a single monastery. The resulting collection does not constitute a survey of later Chinese Buddhist culture. This was not our goal. Our objective was rather to expand the interdisciplinary conversation that allows us to see post-Tang Buddhism as a force that flowed across social, ethnic, and gender boundaries and fostered the development of cultural riches comparable to if not greater than those celebrated as the fruit of the Confucian social order.

Several of the essays originated with a symposium held in 1994 in connection with an exhibition, "Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism 850–1850," at the Spencer Art Museum at the University of Kansas. Simply entitled "Chinese Buddhist Culture," the symposium was designed to provide social, political, literary, and religious contexts for the works of art in the exhibition. Scholars from various fields were invited to address any aspect of Buddhist culture in China from 850 to 1850, using objects in the exhibition as points of departure. Additional essays were commissioned especially for this volume to encompass subjects beyond the scope of the symposium.

Liturgical Culture: Image, Text, and Ritual

The first two essays concern works—objects, rituals, and texts—that formed and furnished cultures of belief centered in the monasteries. T. Griffith Foulk, with the "Latter Days" exhibition in his sights, challenges the art historical presentation of Buddhist images in museum settings, divorced from their original cultural contexts. As a historian of the "social, institutional, and cultic, as well as the doctrinal dimensions of religion," Foulk is less concerned with the aesthetic properties of images than with how they were once employed and what they meant to those who employed them. To suggest the range of possibility, he draws a fundamental distinction between iconic and noniconic uses of images, outlining eight categories of the latter and allowing that a single image might serve multiple functions simultaneously. While acknowledging the difficulty of determining the former uses of objects that have come into museum collections with little or no information on their provenance, he warns of the dangers of overreliance on either physical appearance or on sutras and commentarial literature in determining the function and meaning of given images. In the absence of detailed records of how an object was actually used in situ, he argues, we can do little more than gauge its suitability for certain purposes by observing similar objects still in use and studying historical usage as known through texts and the archaeological record. For sutras and commentarial literature to be relevant to a given image, they would have to have been known and important to the people who produced and used the image. These texts are not in themselves sufficient evidence of meaning; they represent a "normative tradition" that may or may not have had direct local application. Scholarly interpretations of meaning must take specific physical and ritual settings into account, drawing when possible on liturgical texts and procedural manuals.

As if responding to this injunction, Daniel Stevenson refers extensively to ritual manuals and local circumstances in exploring the history of the *shuilu fahui,* the "Buddhist rite for deliverance of creatures of water and land." He characterizes the rite as a heterogeneous form of cultural production "rife with instability and conflict," its ritual protocols "the product of a socially dense and shifting communicative process." He thus makes a compelling case against

viewing it as a monolithic historical entity and likewise against narrow interpretations of its most striking visual artifacts, the murals and altar scrolls. He agrees with Foulk that the meanings of Buddhist images were not fixed, but rather historically constituted, open to reinterpretation in different settings, and that scholars have too often taken Buddhist sutras as authoritative, rather than probing the specifics of local usage. Stevenson develops these ideas in light of recent theoretical studies, arguing that understanding the function of Buddhist art, including its potential to serve as symbolic capital, hinges on its relational engagement with the strategies of reception employed by different groups. The same argument holds for the *shuilu* ritual manuals and the performance of the rite itself.

Stevenson leads us into the heart of *shuilu* ritual traditions, beginning with a careful examination of *shuilu* ritual manuals and paintings. He discusses the primary extant texts—their authors, sources, contents, differences, and utility as documentary sources of different socio-historical contexts—and their visual counterparts, the sets of altar scrolls, raising the interesting question of the relative primacy of literary and visual components of the rite. Against this background, he explores the contours of *shuilu* history, revealing tensions between the mythically, historically, and imperially sanctioned tradition of Jinshan, with its regional derivatives, and competing traditions, most notably the recodification of the rite by the late-Ming monk Yunqi Zhuhong (1535–1615). Having demonstrated the historical instability in the rite, he turns finally to the complexities and variations of its actual performance, including the altar arrangements, schedule of ritual activity, protocols of the altar space, ritual personnel, and roles of the iconographic scrolls. Consideration of the scrolls returns the author to the question of the function of Buddhist images. Clearest in the case of the *shuilu* paintings is what they are not—they are not "icons." Their actual roles are more complicated, depending as they do on who saw them, under what circumstances, and at what point in relation to the performance of the rite.

While the *shuilu* was deeply embedded in Buddhist monastic culture and the property of clerical ritual specialists, its power over the popular imagination reached far beyond the monastery walls and into secular cultural arenas also examined in this book, namely, those of the literati and the court. Literati engagement with the *shuilu* is personified by the great Northern Song scholar-official Su Shi (1037–1101), whose patronage of the rite and poetic responses to its imagery earned him a central place in its authorizing history and, accordingly, in Stevenson's essay. The late-Ming *shuilu* reformer Yunqi Zhuhong might be taken as representative of the scholarly clerics who moved in literati circles, such as that of the powerful art critic, connoisseur, painter, and calligrapher Dong Qichang (1555–1636).[2] As to the court, Stevenson's description of the political uses of the *shuilu* rite by Yuan and Ming imperial households to publicize their "divine prerogative as holder[s] of the Mandate and sovereign of all under Heaven" resonates with Patricia Berger's characterizations of the political motives of the Ming Yongle emperor (r. 1403–1424) in summoning an eminent cleric from Tibet to conduct a grand mortuary rite on behalf of the emperor's deceased parents.

Buddhism and Literati Culture: Calligraphy and Poetry

The two essays composing the second section of this book examine episodes in the history of what might be called Buddhist literati culture, with the understanding that this culture was

not limited by social or institutional boundaries, but flowed in and out of the gates of monasteries and homes of lay believers, including the palace. Buddhist dimensions of the lives of the literati in "later" imperial China have only recently begun to receive significant scholarly attention, a development exemplified by the book *Mount Lu Revisited: Buddhism in the Life and Writings of Su Shih* by Beata Grant, one of the contributors to this volume.[3] Traditionally, Chinese "literati culture" was equated with Confucian culture, with the literati identified as male scholars who shared a cultural space by virtue of their common schooling in the Confucian classics and their secular career goal, namely, service to the state. Others, such as clerics, women, eunuchs, and non-Chinese appeared in this frame slightly, if at all. That many literary and artistic Chinese men were also practicing Buddhists and that many Buddhist monks were well versed in the scholarly arts were deemed circumstances of little cultural consequence. Recognition of Buddhist aspects of the aesthetic lives of the literati has generally been limited to unavoidable cases, such as those of a relatively small number of celebrated monk-writers and -painters and the laymen with whom they associated, and even in these cases the religious elements of their associations and productions have often been played down in favor of literary or aesthetic issues.[4]

From a critical perspective, calligraphy—the quintessential scholarly art—has been a Confucian bastion, a primary site for the affirmation of secular, masculine, elite values. Despite the importance of calligraphy in the dissemination of Buddhist texts, the many monk-practitioners of the art, and the presence of Buddhist monk-calligraphers in the canon, it is hard to find Buddhist perspectives in the modern scholarship on this art. The Buddhist twist that Amy McNair gives to her study of the critical reception of the calligraphy of Zhang Jizhi (1186–1266) is thus novel. A Southern Song scholar-official, Zhang Jizhi was a devout Buddhist who turned his brush to the transcription of Buddhist scriptures and, like many other notable Song scholars, associated with Chan monks.[5] Later responses to his art were decidedly mixed. Examining this phenomenon through a Buddhist lens, McNair argues that, along with artistic, social, and political factors, Zhang's engagement with Buddhist culture influenced the reception of his work.

On the negative side of the critical ledger, two Yuan-dynasty Confucian scholars denigrated Zhang Jizhi's calligraphy style as crazy, mad, and lacking in method, thereby placing him outside the revered classical tradition and aligning him instead with monk-artists of the past. McNair asks if their assessments were based on purely aesthetic considerations—matters of brush technique and style—or colored by Confucian, anti-Buddhist prejudices, including bias against the art of Buddhist monks and those who associated with them. In contrast, two late-Ming scholar-officials, Bi Xizhi (act. ca. 1620) and Dong Qichang, both lay Buddhists, viewed Zhang Jizhi's calligraphy in a positive light. But the issues are here again style and status: the status of stylistic sources within the closed, self-referencing system of traditional Chinese art history. Their critical tactic, McNair argues, was to credit Zhang with high-class sources of inspiration, albeit very different ones, and ignore less elevated sources, such as the calligraphy of Zhang's contemporaries or that of artisan-class sutra scribes. In colophons written in 1620 for Zhang's transcription of the Diamond Sutra of 1246, Bi Xizhi affirms Zhang's elite credentials by finding echoes of the classical tradition in his calligraphy, while Dong Qichang quotes a Chan source in lauding Zhang's achievement as independently created expression, an "outflowing of the innermost self."

The concerns of eight fourteenth-century monks who added colophons to another of Zhang's transcriptions of the Diamond Sutra (1248) were of a different order, lying with the teaching of the scripture rather than the style of the calligraphy. This does not mean that they were unconcerned with the act of writing or the physical object upon which they wrote. On the contrary, they were both sensitive to the aesthetic qualities of the work and acutely aware of the tension between words and truth—the contradiction inherent in using beautifully written words to transmit a truth that, according to the scripture itself, "words cannot express." McNair sees these clerics as winning "a pious struggle against appreciating this sutra transcription as a source of aesthetic gratification." Bringing the discussion full circle, the author of the final colophon on this Diamond Sutra, an early-Ming layman who viewed it in the company of monks, found the multivalent nature of Zhang's transcription cause for celebration. He sighs with pleasure over the idea that Buddhists treasure a text that Confucians admire for the beauty of its calligraphy.

Scholarly aesthetic and literary aspects of monastic culture glimpsed in McNair's essay are explored from another angle in Beata Grant's study of nun-poets of the late imperial period. Grant offers a gendered view of literary pursuits behind monastery walls, introducing her subjects as a subgroup of a social category that became increasingly visible and influential in the Ming and Qing periods, namely, educated women. While her subjects got themselves to nunneries, they by no means disappeared from sight. In retrospect, they seem to have been on the front lines of negotiation between contradictory trends of the time: the social and physical oppression of women, on the one hand, and increased female education, on the other. Their biographies are sketchy, but their poetry gives access to their rich emotional and spiritual lives. Grant divides these women into two broad, overlapping categories—those who entered convents because of social and economic circumstances, such as widowhood, and those who appear to have had a true religious calling. Through translations and interpretations of their poetry, Grant reveals their past sorrows, losses, hopes for the future, feelings about new Buddhist "families," faith in the Pure Land, immersion in Chan teachings, efforts to sever worldly attachments, spiritual realizations, the joys of living a contemplative life, and much more.

There are many direct parallels between the literary and artistic activities of Chinese monks and nuns, and, of course, gender does not alter the contradiction inherent in Buddhist encounters with the arts noted above, the tension between Buddhist teachings of "emptiness" and "nonattachment" on the one hand, and the clergy's reliance on and engagement with words and images on the other. Grant tells of educated women who gave up their literary pursuits when they became nuns, but she concentrates on those who did not leave their poetry, painting, and calligraphy at the convent gate when they took the tonsure.[6] The poems of some refer to the apparent conflict between their embrace of Buddhist teachings and the pleasure or solace they derived from their writing. The eighteenth-century nun Miaohui, for instance, wrote, "Words are inherently empty, and yet I am still fond of brush and ink." Attachment to literary activities was especially problematic for Chan adherents because Chan took pride in its transmission of the Dharma without reliance on "words and letters." At the same time, Chan adherents produced a copious literature rationalized by the Buddhist concept of "skillful means," the use of any expedient in teaching the Dharma. Thus, as Grant sums it up, "Many educated Buddhist nuns chose to tread the razor's edge between writing poetry for its own sake and writing as a means of expressing the Dharma."

Buddhist Culture in the Political Sphere: Painting, Architecture, and Music

The final section of this book looks at political engagements with Buddhist culture from the Ming through the modern period. The four essays examine notable instances in which Buddhist arts and architecture were used to political and economic ends, demonstrating the continued importance of Buddhism to China's rulers and the extent to which Chinese Buddhism retained its cultural force nationally and internationally long after the end of the "golden age" and the passing of the "Tang International Style" in art.

As they had been for centuries, Buddhist art and architecture were, in the Ming, vehicles for a wide range of cultural transactions, social and political as well as spiritual and aesthetic. My essay examines a series of such transactions involving members and close associates of the Ming court, including princes, women, eunuchs, and clerics with close ties to the imperial family. I argue that the court, by bestowing buildings, icons, plaques, steles, sutras, and other gifts upon Buddhist monasteries, linked the magnificence of the church and state and thus, by visual means, used Buddhist establishments to affirm imperial cultural authority. Like their imperial predecessors, Ming rulers used Buddhism in the protection of the state, the imperial ancestor cult, and the conduct of foreign affairs and as a channel of communication with the countryside. At the same time, Ming-court Buddhism had its own flavor imparted by the personal religious concerns of individual imperial patrons, swings in court politics, relationships with neighboring Buddhist countries, and developments within Chinese religion more broadly, such as increased syncretism and emphasis on ritual performance. To illuminate such continuities and departures, I sketch Ming imperial involvement with selected works of art and architecture, emphasizing the integration of Buddhist and imperial concerns and the deployment of imperial visual culture in Buddhist contexts. Framed geographically, the discussion begins at the courts of Nanjing and Beijing, moves west to Shanxi province, to arrive finally in Qinghai province on the far western frontier. In moving away from the center, we venture into terrain largely uncharted in standard accounts of later Chinese art and see how imperial patronage of Buddhist monasteries extended the cultural hegemony of the court into remote, politically sensitive regions.

Patricia Berger covers some of the same political and geographic terrain in focusing on a remarkable pictorial handscroll that documents one of the great exercises in religious diplomacy and political theater of the early-Ming dynasty: the visit of the Tibetan cleric Dezhin Shegpa (c. Helima or Halima, 1384–1415), the Fifth Karmapa, to China in 1407. The Fifth Karmapa went to the capital of Nanjing on imperial invitation to perform a mass of universal salvation in honor of the Yongle emperor's late father, the Hongwu emperor, and putative mother, Empress Ma. Over the course of the Karmapa's stay in Nanjing, and even after his departure for Mount Wutai in Shanxi province, a steady stream of miracles emanated from Linggu Monastery, where the rite was performed, the imperial burial, and the imperial palace. The scroll records these miracles in forty-nine brilliantly colored, finely detailed paintings and inscriptions in five languages, the Chinese versions of which Berger translates completely.

Berger interprets the ritual event and attendant miracles—"an extended moment of 'consensual hallucination' "—as part of the Yongle emperor's drive to reestablish the link between China and Tibet forged by the Mongols during the preceding Yuan dynasty and to sanctify his irregular assumption of the throne. The political and religious potency of the miracles, in her view, derives from their resonance with the ancient Chinese belief in omens as indicators

 of Heaven's response to a ruler's virtue or lack thereof and with the Buddhist visions vouchsafed the devout on Mount Wutai, the home of the bodhisattva Manjushri. Connecting the scroll with earlier Chinese portrayals of portentous events, she reads its mixture of Buddhist and indigenous Chinese signs as multivalent, speaking simultaneously to the spiritual power (buddhahood) of the Fifth Karmapa, the efficacy of his rituals, the sacredness of Linggu Monastery, the recognition of the late emperor and empress as manifestations of Manjushri, and the dual political identities of the imperial ancestors and the Yongle emperor himself as virtuous monarchs in the Confucian tradition and *chakravartin* (rulers of a Buddhist utopia).

Terese Bartholomew carries the themes of imperial Buddhist culture and imperial support of Tibetan Buddhism into the Qing dynasty (1644–1912) in her study of three *thangkas* (Tibetan-style hanging scrolls). To set the stage, she reviews the Qing court's patronage of Tibetan Buddhism, which like that of the preceding Yuan and Ming courts mixed devotion with diplomacy, and introduces the major lama lineages of the Qing period. Of special importance to her narrative are the powerful Jangya Hutuktus of Beijing, who served as state preceptors to the Manchu emperors, particularly the Jangya Hutuktu Rolpay Dorje, a notable scholar, expert iconographer, and accomplished artist who became the Grand Lama of Beijing when the Qianlong emperor ascended the throne in 1735. Rolpay Dorje was no doubt closely involved with the preparations for one of the great religious events of Qianlong's reign, the state visit of the Sixth Panchen Lama, who traveled from Tibet to the imperial summer resort in Chengde (Jehol) on the occasion of the emperor's seventieth birthday in 1780. To make his distinguished guest feel at home, the emperor built a replica of the lama's Tibetan monastery home, Tashilhunpo, and elaborately furnished it with *thangkas.* Bartholomew not only demonstrates that three *thangkas* now in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco were among them, but also that they were "birthday *thangkas*" made for the imperial celebration. As auspicious and celebratory objects, these images performed noniconic functions. They might be taken as further illustration of Foulk's point that images that look like icons might function as "decorations, illustrations, didactic tools, and political texts to be read for their symbolic meaning."

In tracing the history of a single Beijing monastery down to the present time, Kenneth Hammond's essay provides a fitting conclusion not only to our consideration of Buddhist culture in the political sphere but also to the volume as a whole. This chapter might be seen as another partial answer to Foulk's call for greater understanding of native contexts of Chinese Buddhist art. Hammond's subject is Zhihua Monastery founded in 1444 by the infamous eunuch Wang Zhen. Beginning at the front gate, Hammond leads us through the courtyards and halls of the complex, taking note of dimensions, building materials, ornamentation, furnishings, and images. The physical environment thus established, he turns to the political history of the monastery, demonstrating the extent to which its fortunes, from the time of its founding in the Ming through its recent restoration completed in 1994, were tied to the "powers and policies of governments based in Beijing."

Like Fahai Monastery, also in Beijing, Zhihua Monastery is a remnant of the Buddhist subculture created by Ming court eunuchs. Eunuchs were not only entrusted with carrying out imperial acts of Buddhist patronage, they also personally embraced and sponsored the religion. Denied full participation in the family-based Confucian social system, they found solace in Buddhism. At the same time, for them as for anyone with the means, monasteries were venues for displays of wealth and power. Hammond convincingly argues that the founding

of the Zhihua Monastery by Wang Zhen must be understood in the context of the emergence of eunuch power in the fifteenth century and recognized as part of the eunuchs' effort "to legitimize and culturally validate their changing role."

Wang Zhen's promotion of music at the monastery was no doubt similarly motivated. As Hammond observes, along with fine buildings, images, and objects, music could "glorify and legitimize the position of the patron." He reminds us that music, like the visual arts, was very much part of the Buddhist cultural environment, but he also goes further, relating the musical heritage of Zhihua Monastery "to a wide range of religious and social phenomena, such as funeral practices and the role of music in the economic life of monasteries." Zhihua Monastery music was "deemed especially desirable" for funerals, and funerary rituals remained an important source of revenue for the monks there until the last of them left the monastery in the mid 1950s, a situation that brings to mind Stevenson's remarks on the continuation of large-scale *shuilu* practice into the twentieth century.

Zhihua Monastery remains a repository of Chinese Buddhist culture, though now a museum rather than a living religious institution. As such, it is like many Chinese monasteries today. While Buddhism is enjoying a revival in China and some monasteries boast growing populations of monks and nuns and lively expansion programs fueled by money from Buddhist communities abroad, many have become protected cultural properties either restored or awaiting restoration for use as museums and public parks. Privileged by its Beijing location and largely intact Ming architecture, Zhihua Monastery is in the vanguard of the latter development. Its architectural and musical legacies endure as commodities in the contemporary cultural marketplace.

The loss of religious function is certainly a violation of the monastery's historical mandate. The commodification of its culture, however, is not. Buddhist monasteries have always been "multiplexes," doubling as museums, parks, tourist destinations, and hostels, as well as centers of religious practice. They have always been sites for all manner of cultural practice, social, economic, political, and aesthetic, just as the religion itself penetrated all of these realms beyond the monastery walls. The essays gathered in this volume only scratch the surface of this tangled reality. They nevertheless demonstrate the power of the cultural lens in examining later Chinese Buddhism and, conversely, the power of a Buddhist lens in examining later Chinese cultural history.

Notes

1. For overviews of later Chinese Buddhist art, see Marsha Weidner, ed., *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism 850–1850* (Lawrence, Kan.: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas; Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994); and Craig Clunas, *Art in China* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Notable studies of post-Tang Buddhism include Chün-fang Yü's *Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981) and her recent chapter, "Ming Buddhism," in *The Cambridge History of China,* ed. Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote, vol. 8: *The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pt. 2, 893–952; also, T. Griffith Foulk, "Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch'an Buddhism," in *Religion and Society in T'ang and Sung China,* ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), 147–208; Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China,* Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series 38 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993); and Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr., eds., *Buddhism in the Sung,* Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism 13 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999). In his

introductory chapter for *Buddhism in the Sung,* Gregory addresses some of the same issues raised here, including the perceived decline of later Chinese Buddhism. Defending Song Buddhism as a subject deserving serious study, for instance, he argues, "The growing body of new research . . . suggests that, far from signaling a decline, the Sung was a period of great efflorescence in Buddhism and that, if any period deserves the epithet of the 'golden age' of Buddhism, the Sung is the most likely candidate" (p. 2). See also the studies cited in note 3.

2. They appear together in an undated group portrait, *A Noble Gathering at Green Woods* by Huang Cunwu (early 17th c.), reproduced in Wai-kam Ho, ed., *The Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang 1555–1636* (Kansas City, Mo.: Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), vol. 1, fig. 1. An art historian cannot help but be struck by the parallel between Zhuhong's reforming rhetoric, specifically his criticism of a "northern" *shuilu* tradition patronized by the court, and Dong Qichang's effort to redirect the course of painting by promoting the theory of the Northern and Southern schools of landscape based on an analogy with the Chan schools of gradual and sudden enlightenment. In Dong's formulation, the Northern school of landscape is identified with court painters and regarded as inferior to the Southern tradition created and transmitted by scholarly artists. The influence and long-term consequences of these reforming movements in their respective fields, ritual and art, were likewise remarkably similar.
3. Beata Grant, *Mount Lu Revisited: Buddhism in the Life and Writings of Su Shih* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994). More perspectives on Song literati Buddhism are offered in studies by Robert Gimello such as his "Mārga and Culture: Learning, Letters, and Liberation in Northern Sung Ch'an," in *Paths to Liberation: The Mārga and Its Transformation in Buddhist Thought,* ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr., and Robert M. Gimello (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1992), 371–437; and by essays in *Buddhism in the Sung,* ed. Gregory and Getz. An art historical view is provided by An-yi Pan's Ph.D. dissertation, "Li Gonglin's Buddhist Beliefs and His *Lotus Society Picture:* An Iconographic Diagram of the Bodhisattva Path" (University of Kansas, 1997). On late-Ming literati patronage of Buddhist monasteries, see Brook, *Praying for Power.* In her doctoral dissertation, "Ch'en Hung-Shou's *Elegant Gathering:* A Late-Ming Pictorial Manifesto of Pure Land Buddhism" (University of Kansas, 1997), Hsing-li Tsai uses a painting as a primary document in examining the Buddhist beliefs of an influential group of literati.
4. This is exemplified by art historians' approach to Dong Qichang, whose writings on art are riddled with Buddhist terms, references, and analogies, most notably his division of landscape painters into Northern and Southern schools in a scheme borrowed from Chan. That this might signal a need to look more carefully at the larger Buddhist environment in which Dong worked has apparently made art historians writing from Neo-Confucian perspectives uncomfortable. They have been at pains to insist that Dong's Northern and Southern schools theory was no more than a clever, historically informed, rhetorical strategy for characterizing and assigning value to painting styles and works of art. To contain and ultimately dismiss discussion of Buddhism in Dong's life and art, they have framed the issue wholly in terms of the painting content and theory, directing their arguments against those who would look for "a Ch'an aesthetic basis for his 'Southern School'" or "Buddhist content for landscape painting." The words cited are James Cahill's in "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's 'Southern and Northern Schools' in the History and Theory of Painting: A Reconsideration," in *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought,* ed. Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1987), 429.
5. On the literary lives of Chan monks in the Song, see Gimello, "Mārga and Culture."
6. In combining literary, artistic, and religious activities, these women were counterparts to the many monk-poets and -painters of the late-imperial period, a number of whom became famous for their artistic accomplishments. See "From the Monks' Quarters to the Scholar's Studio," in *Latter Days of the Law,* 417–452.

LITURGICAL CULTURE

Image, Text, and Ritual

1

Religious Functions of Buddhist Art in China

T. Griffith Foulk

THERE ARE, OF COURSE, numerous ways to look at and appreciate works of Chinese Buddhist art, and many different questions that one may ask about them. Images of buddhas, bodhisattvas, lohans, patriarchs, and other sacred figures associated with the Buddhist tradition in China might be appreciated, for example, from a purely aesthetic point of view. Or they might be viewed and interpreted as representational art that symbolizes various elements of Buddhist mythology or doctrine. As a historian of Chinese Buddhism who is interested in the social, institutional, and cultic as well as doctrinal dimensions of the religion, I have my own particular way of looking at images—paintings and sculpture. It is this point of view I endeavor to share in this essay.

I have had much opportunity to see works of East Asian Buddhist art in their original cultural contexts, monasteries and temples where they are placed on altars, serve in rituals, decorate abbots' quarters, or are stored and occasionally displayed as treasures. When I encounter such works in a museum, I cannot help but see them as things somehow severed, incomplete, and out of place, like the friezes in the British Museum that were physically cut off the Parthenon and carried away to a foreign environment. I react this way because I take it for granted that an understanding of the native contexts is essential if one wants to appreciate why Buddhist images were produced in China, how they were used, and what they meant to the people who used them. It is not enough to see an image in a museum, identify it on the basis of its iconography, and then try to explain its meaning and function in classical Chinese culture by referring to the mythology of the figure presented in normative Buddhist scriptures.

This is not to blame museums that have collections of Chinese Buddhist art for the fact that the works in their collections have been separated from the physical, social, and religious settings that once framed them and gave them meaning. After all, those settings existed in the past, and little or nothing of them may remain today. Indeed, I am grateful that the works of art themselves have survived, that they are well cared for, and that we have the opportunity to view them. I do not mean that we should bemoan their fate or try to return them to their places of origin in any literal sense, for that is obviously impossible. What I mean, rather, is that viewing works of Chinese Buddhist art in a museum triggers in me a desire to reconstruct

in my imagination the world in which they were first produced, used, and understood. As a historian, I want to use all of the evidence and critical methods at my disposal to ensure that these reconstructions, while imaginary, are not merely figments, but as "true" as I can make them.

In this essay, I begin by sketching a rudimentary scheme of classification designed to elucidate the range of religious, economic, and social functions that Buddhist art has had in China from medieval times down to the present. I then discuss the difficulties involved in trying to guess the erstwhile functions of Chinese Buddhist images now in museums on the basis of their appearance alone. Finally, I raise the issue of the "meaning" of images in the Chinese Buddhist tradition, arguing that scholarly interpretations in this area should not be based on normative sutra and commentarial literature alone. Rather, they should take into account the original settings and functions of the works of art in question and should consult, whenever possible, procedural manuals and liturgical texts that shed light on how these works were used in rituals.

Iconic and Noniconic Functions of the Buddhist Images

A fundamental distinction can be drawn between the use of images—representations of buddhas, bodhisattvas, lohans, patriarchs, and other sacred figures associated with the Buddhist tradition in China—as icons and the use of images in various noniconic ways. By "icon" I mean an image, either two- or three-dimensional, of a sacred personage that serves as the focal point of an active cult (worship or propitiation) of the figure depicted. In Chinese Buddhism, there is a clear sense that such images not only resemble the beings represented, but actually embody or provide a "seat" *(zuo)* for their invisible spirits *(ling).* When used as icons, images are generally installed on altars or treated as if they were, with altar decoration



(e.g., flowers, candles) on either side of them and a table for offerings in front. In Buddhist monasteries, all newly enshrined icons are consecrated in a rite of "opening the eyes" *(kaiyan),* which brings the image to life, as it were, by inviting the appropriate spirit to come and reside in it. Thereafter, the icon serves as an object of cult, with rites involving offerings, obeisance, and prayers regularly performed before it.

Not all images are used as icons, however. Those that are not are generally not enshrined on altars and thus are not consecrated in a rite of "opening the eyes." The many and varied noniconic uses of images in the history of Chinese Buddhism may be broadly enumerated as follows.

In the first place, images have frequently functioned as decorations, illustrations, didactic tools, and pictorial texts to be read for their symbolic meaning. Examples include frontispieces of sutras, which typically show the Buddha preaching the sutra in question (fig. 1.1) and may also depict famous episodes that occur within it; illustrations of themes from Buddhist and popular cosmology, soteriology, and mythology, such as realms of rebirth, Pure Lands, and the judgments and punishments meted out by the Ten Kings of Hell (fig. 1.2); depictions of famous incidents found in the hagiographical records of patriarchs and eminent monks, such as Bodhidharma crossing the Yangzi River on a reed (fig. 1.3) or the meeting between Yaoshan and Li Ao (fig. 1.4); and representations of doctrinal positions, such as the "unity of the three teachings"—Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism (fig. 1.5).

Secondly, the production of Buddhist images was widely undertaken as a means of making merit *(gongde)* that could subsequently be dedicated *(huixiang)* to the benefit of ancestors and family members, other living beings, and the success of whatever spiritual or worldly projects the sponsor had in mind. Whether or not an image was used as an icon after it was completed, its function as a merit-making device in the process of production was essentially noniconic.

Thirdly, Buddhist images have provided the surfaces or backgrounds on which all sorts of related and unrelated texts—eulogies, poems, records of donation, prayers—have been inscribed. Bronze images of Manjushri surviving from the Northern Wei dynasty (386–534), for example, often bear inscriptions on their bases that record acts of merit making and associated prayers entirely unrelated to the worship of Manjushri. Insofar as the function of the image in such cases was to provide a sacred surface for permanently registering a good deed with a spiritual authority,

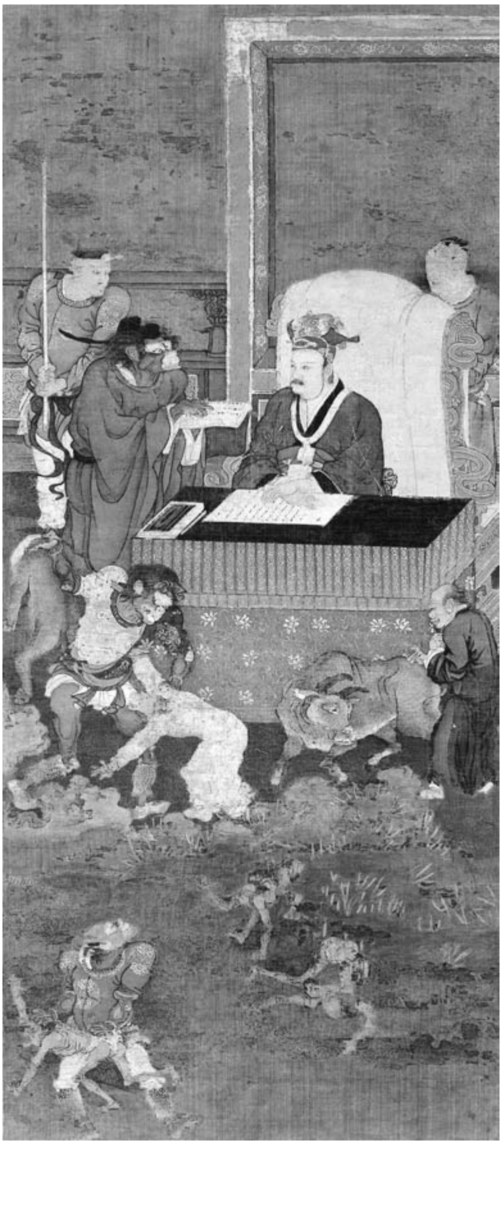


Figure 1.1 *Original Vow of the Bodhisattva Kshitigarbha Sutra (Dizang pusa benyuan jing),* vol. 1. Ming dynasty, dated to 1429. Frontispiece of a woodblock-printed, accordion-fold book, 34.61 x 12.38 cm. Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Far Eastern Art Council Fund.

the use of the image can be deemed noniconic. During the Song dynasty (960–1279), to cite another example, it was common for people to produce a portrait *(dingxiang)* of an eminent abbot and then request him to inscribe a blank area at the top of the painting with a "self-eulogy" *(zizan).* Whether or not such portraits were subsequently used as icons (they often were), their function as a surface for such inscriptions was noniconic.

Fourthly, the insides of sculpted images have sometimes been used as repositories for sacred scriptures, relics, and other religious paraphernalia. Such practices are often associated with the consecration and empowerment of an image as an icon, but to the extent that the purpose was the storage or preservation of the items hidden inside, the function of the image can be regarded as noniconic.

Figure 1.2 Jin Dashou, *King of Hell* (from a set of ten). Southern Song dynasty, before 1195. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 111.8 x 47.6 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Rogers Fund, 1930 (30.76.290).



A fifth type of noniconic function is talismanic, the use of images as talismans, either by themselves or in conjunction with written spells *(dhāraṇī)* (fig. 1.6). These images are understood as imbued with some kind of sacred force, in much the same way that icons are enlivened with the spirits of the sacred beings they represent. Talismans differ from icons, however, in that the embodied force is conceived more as an impersonal, magical power than as the indwelling spirit of a deity. Also, when functioning as a talisman, an image is kept on one's person or in a dwelling



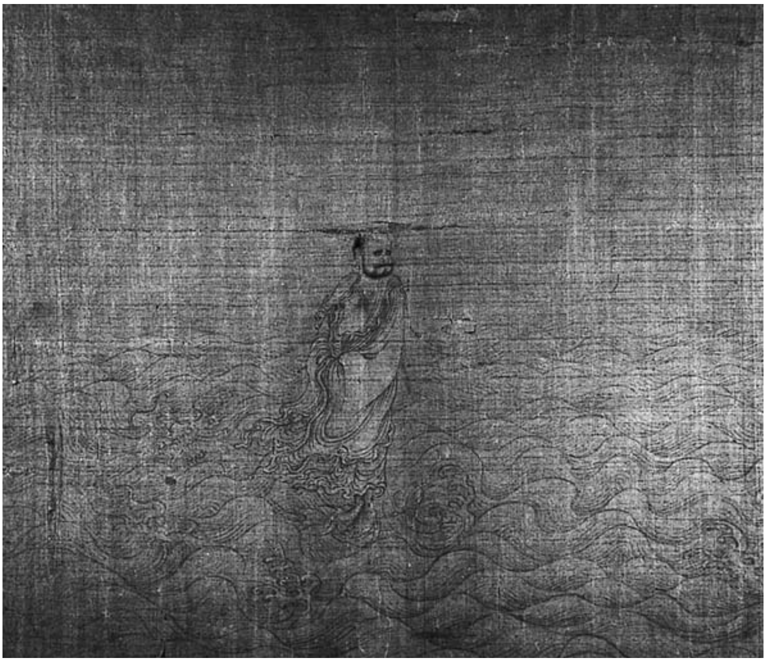


Figure 1.3 Artist unknown, *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi River on a Reed.* Ming dynasty, ca. 1580. Album leaf; ink on silk, 22.9 x 26.2 cm. The University of Michigan Museum of Art. Margaret Watson Parker Collection, 1969/1.103.

as a means of warding off misfortune or garnering blessings; it does not serve as an object of worship on an altar.

The use of Buddhist images as devices for visualization practices or other meditative techniques, to the extent that it can be historically attested in China, constitutes a sixth type of noniconic function. It should be cautioned, however, that Western art-historical scholarship



Figure 1.4 Attributed to Zhiweng, *Meeting between Yaoshan and Li Ao.* Song dynasty, before 1256. Horizontal panel mounted as a hanging scroll, ink on paper, 84.1 x 31.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Edward Elliott Family Collection, Purchase. The Dillon Fund Gift, 1982 (1982.2.1).



Figure 1.5 Artist unknown, *The Three Teachings.* Ming dynasty, late fifteenth–early sixteenth century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 146.7 x 73.7 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri (Gift of Bronson Trevor in honor of his father, John B. Trevor).

has been too quick to impute meditative functions to works of Buddhist art that, when their native ritual contexts are subjected to careful ethnographic or text-critical study, turn out to have had rather different uses. There is scant evidence, for example, that mandalas ever served as objects of meditation in the esoteric Buddhism *(mijiao)* of East Asia. Most often, mandalas functioned in rituals as icons, which is to say, they have been understood to embody and make present the spirits of the deities portrayed. The chief noniconic uses of mandalas are as protective talismans and symbolic representations of sacred hierarchies and realms. As this example shows, the association of Buddhist images with meditation is overblown in the Western scholarly imagination, but it is not entirely



Figure 1.6 *Incantations to Guanyin Bodhisattva for Rescue from All Difficulties.* Ming dynasty, dated 1586. Woodblock-printed book, 24 x 9.9 cm. Indianapolis Museum of Art. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Shula.



Figure 1.7 Artist unknown, *Amitabha with Two Attending Bodhisattvas.* Southern Song, twelfth century. Hanging scroll, ink, color, and gold on silk, 133.5 x 79.3 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art. Leonard C. Hanna Jr. Fund, 1974.35.

without basis in the Chinese Buddhist tradition. The Song-dynasty painting *Amitabha with Two Attending Bodhisattvas,* in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art (fig. 1.7), for example, invokes the meditative and devotional practice of "buddha mindfulness" *(nianfo),* for the six characters *"Nanmo Amituofo"* (Hail Amitabha Buddha) are written above the figures ten times over, as if for repetitive recitation.

My discussion thus far has focused on what may be called the religious functions of Buddhist images, including their use on altars as icons and the six noniconic functions just

outlined. Although this classification scheme is a product of my own analysis, it is nevertheless grounded in the normative tradition. The distinctions I have drawn between various iconic and noniconic uses of images are based on religious beliefs and practices endemic to Chinese Buddhism. Such an approach is necessary if one wishes to explain how Chinese Buddhists understood the Buddhist art objects with which they surrounded themselves. This approach does not, however, treat all the functions of Buddhist images that might be considered by outside observers. In particular, it does not take into account the economic and social aspects of the production, distribution, and subsequent use of art.

Throughout the history of Chinese Buddhism, images have often had important material as well as spiritual value. Because they represented a significant investment of expensive raw materials (e.g., precious metals, lacquer, silk, pigments) and skilled labor, they made good gifts and barter items and were at times used almost like cash. Images also provided monasteries with a relatively safe means of storing wealth. To steal an icon, the seat of a powerful spirit, was a more harrowing proposition for the common thief than the simple lifting of inanimate goods. By the same token, images were a form of monastic property that proved (with some historically noteworthy exceptions) relatively immune to taxation or confiscation by the state. The use of Buddhist images to concentrate and preserve wealth constitutes a seventh type of noniconic function, one that we may term "economic."

Finally, there is an eighth type of noniconic function of images that can be best described as "social." Given the expense, not to say economic wastefulness, of producing Buddhist statues and paintings, such production could amount to a form of conspicuous consumption signaling wealth and social status. Thus, lay families that had images made for the express purpose of generating spiritual merit for dedication to their ancestors were, in addition to proclaiming their piety and honoring their dead, making a clear public statement about their own standing in society. Within the Buddhist order, too, the production and display of images served a variety of social functions. The identity of the chief object of worship *(benzun)* on a central altar has often signaled a monastery's sectarian affiliation. The use of an image of "Shakyumuni Holding Up a Flower" *(nianhua Shijia)* on a central altar, for example, represents an appeal to the Chan lineage myth as a legitimation device and indicates that the monks who set up the image regarded themselves as members or followers of that lineage. During the Song dynasty, the identities of the patriarchs and former abbots whose images were enshrined in a monastery portrait hall *(zhentang)* were a sure sign of that institution's association with a particular lineage *(zong)* of dharma transmission: Chan, Tiantai, or Lu. Also, in medieval China, the possession of certain images by individual monks often amounted to a public statement of their qualifications to perform rites or lecture on texts associated with the images in question.

The Difficulties of Determining Historical Usage

From the preceding overview of the iconic and noniconic functions of Buddhist images in China, it should be clear that these two categories are not mutually exclusive. One and the same image could be (and often was) used simultaneously in a variety of iconic and noniconic ways. The same image, moreover, could serve different functions on different occasions and could go into and out of use as an icon any number of times. In the next chapter, Daniel Stevenson provides an excellent example of the multivalence of Buddhist images in observing

the various roles that the scrolls used in the rite for deliverance of creatures of water and land *(shuilu fahui)* could play at different times and for different audiences. Thus, when we are confronted with a work of Chinese Buddhist art that now resides in a museum, there is no way of determining positively, on the basis of its appearance alone, what its past functions were. Only if an image is accompanied by records that detail its provenance and usage in situ, before being "collected," or if it can somehow be proven to be identical with a piece that appears in a historical document, such as a monastery ground plan or treasure inventory, can we be sure of the institutional and ritual contexts in which it was used in the past.

In the absence of such external (and largely textual) evidence, the best we can do is to make some judgments about the suitability of a particular image, by traditional Chinese Buddhist standards, for use as an icon or service in some other, noniconic capacity. These "traditional standards," however, are nowhere explicitly stated or written down; they are simply matters of custom. The only way to get a handle on them, therefore, is by extensive observation of contemporary uses of images in Chinese Buddhism and comparative study, both textual and archeological, of historical uses. Only then, through a process of inductive reasoning, may we begin to get a sense of what sorts of Buddhist images have been deemed appropriate for what sorts of functions at different times and places. The following remarks, while admittedly impressionistic, are based on more than two decades of formal and informal observation and historical study of Buddhist monastic institutions in East Asia (all within the sphere of Chinese cultural influence).

Among the various types of images deemed suitable to serve as icons in Chinese Buddhism, sculpture (in wood, metal, clay, stone, lacquer) clearly holds pride of place. Whenever the scale of a monastery or mortuary hall is lavish, showing that the cost of construction was no object, or whenever the figures depicted are to be shown special reverence, sculpture has traditionally been the preferred medium. Nevertheless, from the standpoint of religious belief and ritual function, two-dimensional images (paintings, engravings, textiles, rubbings, and, in modern times, photographs) can serve as "spirit seats" equally well. So too can wooden spirit tablets engraved with the names of the sacred beings to be worshiped. After all, the spirit is invisible; its integrity and power do not depend on the physical object it inhabits. When employed as icons, sculptures, paintings, and tablets alike are placed on altars where they serve as the focal points of offerings and prayers.

Virtually all sculptures and tablets representing personages sacred to Chinese Buddhists have traditionally been deemed suitable for use as icons. The same cannot be said of two-dimensional images. Paintings and engravings that are today used as icons, or ones that remain on altars and thus clearly had an iconic function in the past, tend to display features that are not shared by all two-dimensional images. For one thing, the primary subject (the figure that is to serve as object of worship) is usually large relative to the available surface area of the painting, prominent relative to any attendant figures that may be shown, and displayed in such a manner that the eye is drawn to it first. Background detail is minimal, or arranged to refocus attention on the central figure. The pose of the primary subject is generally formal, which is to say, the subject is not depicted engaged in any particular activity; it simply stands or sits as if presenting itself or being introduced to the viewer. Images most often used as icons, in other words, are ones that seem to invite the viewer to interact with the subject in some immediate way, rather than merely to glimpse events in a distant spiritual realm inhabited by the subject.

Some specific examples may clarify this point. The painting *Amitabha with Two Attending Bodhisattvas,* mentioned above, is well suited for iconic use because Amitabha stands in a formal pose, is much larger than the figures of the two flanking bodhisattvas, and clearly dominates the painting as the center of attention. The string of characters—*"Nanmo Amituofo"*—inscribed ten times above three deities not only confirms the obvious fact that Amitabha is the main figure; they also signal that he is to be viewed as an object of cult, for calling that buddha's name repeatedly is one of the main ways of worshiping him. The discussion of this painting in the catalogue *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism 850–1850* points out that the background of the portrait is a "sun disk," which may be associated with the practice (recommended in the Amitayur-dhyana Sutra) of using the sun as a device for visualizing Amitabha's Pure Land.[1] It is clear, in any case, that Amitabha and his attendants are in some sort of spiritual realm, not on this earth, and that they are not doing anything in particular; they are just standing there "waiting," as it were, to interact with the worshiping viewer. It is also noteworthy that this painting of the Amitabha triad looks as if it could be a representation of an actual altar arrangement—a painting of three sculptures arranged on an altar. The point here is not that the artist necessarily used sculptures on an altar as a model, although that might be the case, but rather that the painting clearly invokes such an altar arrangement and thus recommends itself for iconic use.

The last point can be made even more persuasively in the case of the *Buddhas of the Three Generations,* a *kesi* tapestry in the collection of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (fig. 1.8). This textile image mirrors an arrangement of statues on an altar that was, as a matter of historical record, quite common from the Southern Song on. The three buddhas sit on daises of the sort used to seat sculptures. "Heavenly umbrellas" hang over each of their heads, as with images on an altar. The three buddhas have two smaller attendants, disciples, who would also be represented on an altar by small sculptures. There is an offering vessel in front of the altar. Finally, in the foreground are figures of the Four Deva Kings, statues of which are typically placed around an altar or in a hall in front of the main buddha hall. Here we have a two-dimensional image that depicts its subjects (the three buddhas) being used as icons, and thus offers itself as suitable for iconic use. In fact, because it incorporates the altar setting within its composition, such a picture could be used as the focal point of cult without being placed on a real altar; a simple offering table and prostration mat set before it as it hung on a wall would suffice.

There are paintings and even sculptures (e.g., Northern Wei bronzes) of sacred beings, such as buddhas or bodhisattvas, that not only invoke or replicate altar arrangements, but also depict people worshiping before sacred images on an altar. The inclusion of worshipers, typically small figures in the foreground bowing or making offerings, clearly shows the images being used as icons. Whether scenes depicting the worship of icons were themselves deemed appropriate for iconic use is another question, however. To the extent that such art is representational, its suitability for placement on an altar is diminished.

As noted above, two-dimensional images in which the subjects strike formal, abstract poses have been used as icons more often than those in which the subjects are engaged in some identifiable activity. But this is not a hard and fast rule, and exceptions can be found. Pictures of lohans (arhats) hung in sets of sixteen or eighteen in dedicated worship halls in Chinese monasteries, for example, often depicted the individual figures engaged in activities such as reciting scriptures, sitting in meditation, or preaching (fig. 1.9). Such activities, however, are

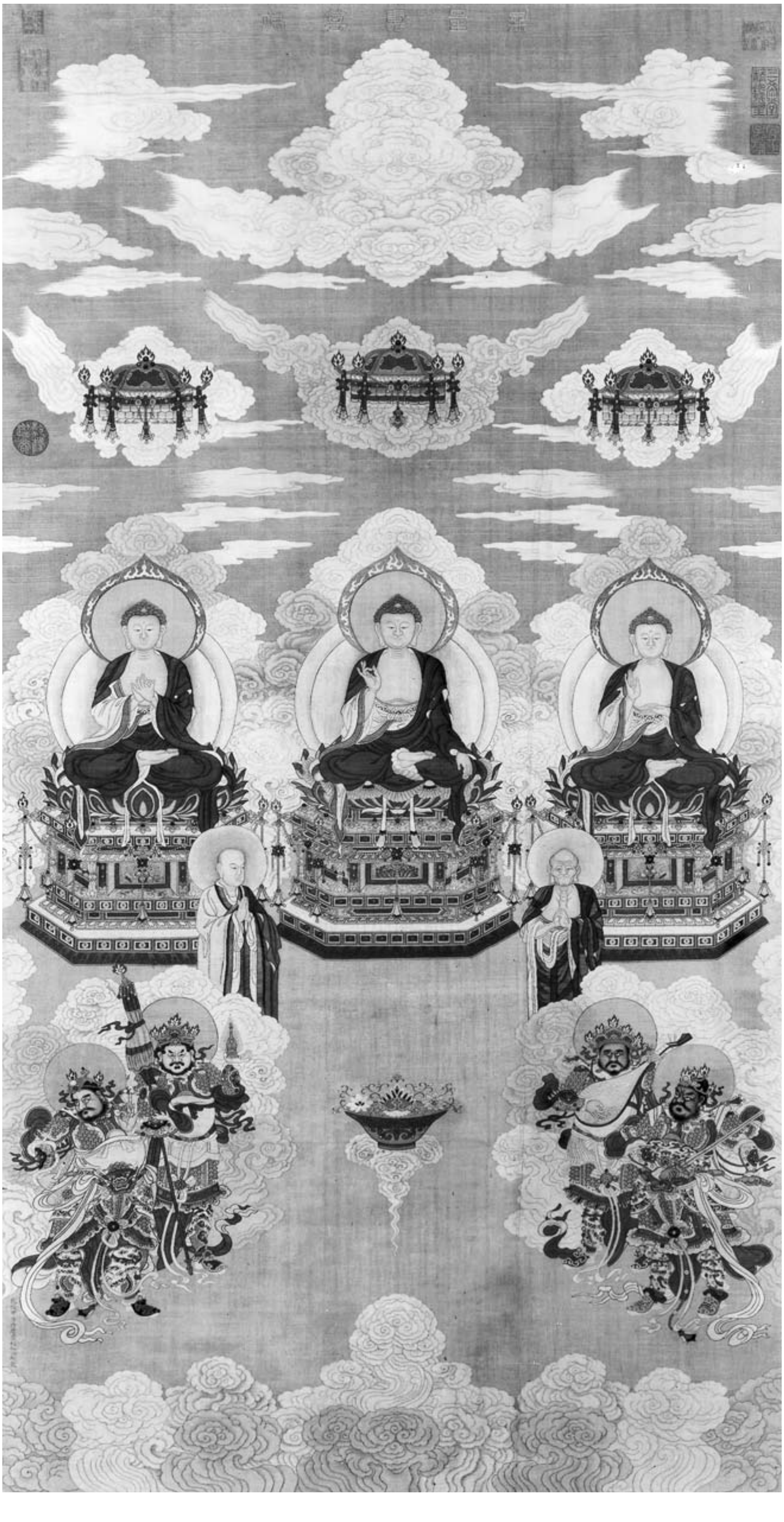


Figure 1.8
Artist unknown, *Buddhas of the Three Generations.* Qing dynasty, 1744. Hanging scroll, *kesi* tapestry, 118.1 x 61 cm. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. The Avery Brundage Collection.



Figure 1.9 Artist unknown, *The Fifth Lohan, Nakula.* Song or Yuan dynasty, thirteenth–fourteenth c. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 115.6 x 52.1 cm. Yale University Art Gallery. Gift of Mrs. Jared K. Morse.

iconographic motifs that helped lend a distinctive appearance and identity to each of the lohans, who might otherwise have merged into a group of nameless saints. Because an icon is basically an image enlivened by a named and identifiable spirit, such anonymity would actually have inhibited the iconic use of lohan portraits. In any case, portrayals of lohans that were originally part of named sets of sixteen or eighteen are more likely to have functioned as icons (in those sets) than those of lohans that go unnamed or that illustrate themes from Buddhist folklore.

Portraits of eminent monks in China were first produced to serve as icons—seats for the spirits of the deceased—in funeral and memorial offering services. When they represented patriarchs (*zushi,* literally "ancestral teachers") who made up a particular lineage of dharma succession in China, such portraits were often hung in sets in a special shrine in a monastery called the patriarch's hall *(zutang)* or portrait hall. From about the tenth century on, those halls also came to house sets of portraits representing the succession of former abbots of a monastery. Thus, as with images of lohans, whenever there is evidence that a portrait of a patriarch or an eminent monk once belonged to a set of same, this is a strong indication that it was produced for iconic use in the annual and monthly memorial services that filled much of the ritual calendar in Chinese Buddhist monasteries.

In monk portraits used as icons, as in images of buddhas, bodhisattvas, and other deities, the preferred pose is a formal, abstract one in which the figure stands out against a blank background. A portrait of the seventeenth-century cleric Yinyuan (fig. 1.10) makes an excellent case in point. Yinyuan is presented frontally, sitting on a ceremonial seat as if giving a sermon in a dharma hall. He wears his most formal robes and holds a staff and a whisk, pieces of regalia emblematic of his authority as abbot. The background is blank, and a large space above the figure's head is provided for a eulogy *(zan),* in this case inscribed by one of his disciples. Such eulogies, whether written by the subject himself or someone else, are conducive to the use of a portrait as an icon because they generally praise the subject and recommend him to viewers as worthy of worship. There is also a sense in the Chinese Buddhist tradition that such portraits are enlivened by the inscription in much the same way that other icons are brought to life in a formal rite of "opening the eyes," especially if the inscription is a self-eulogy. In any case, the presence of a eulogy above a portrait of a monk calls to mind the mortuary origins of the art form, for the eulogy genre is closely related to the writing of epitaphs on memorial steles.

Portraits of patriarchs or eminent monks that lack eulogies are less likely to have had an iconic function. The same may be said of illustrations of famous incidents from patriarchal hagiographies, such as the painting *Meeting between Yaoshan and Li Ao,* attributed to the early-thirteenth-century monk Zhiweng (see fig. 1.4) or the anonymous Ming-dynasty (1368–1644) *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi on a Reed* (see fig. 1.3). Still, there are no hard and fast rules here. Because the latter painting bears no eulogy and depicts the patriarch as a rather small figure leaning into the wind in the midst of an expanse of waves, it is difficult to imagine its ever being placed on an altar for use as an icon in a Bodhidharma memorial service *(damo ji).*[2] A much larger, Yuan-dynasty (1279–1368) treatment of the same subject, however, has a eulogy inscribed at the top and depicts the patriarch against a background devoid of all detail save the single reed under his feet (fig. 1.11). Such an image may well have served as an icon on occasion, but there is no way of knowing for sure.

Even portraits of eminent monks and patriarchs that look ideally suited for iconic use may



Figure 1.10 Artist unknown, *Portrait of the Priest Yinyuan* (J. Ingen). Qing dynasty/Edo period, before 1676. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 119.5 x 58 cm. Private collection.



Figure 1.11 Li Yaofu, *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangzi on a Reed.* Yuan dynasty, before 1317. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 85.6 x 34.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Edward Elliott Family Collection Purchase. The Dillon Fund Gift, 1982 (1982.1.2).

actually have served other functions. During the Song dynasty, for example, mortuary-style portraits of monks came to be painted well before the deaths of their subjects and distributed widely to disciples and patrons. That practice signaled the exalted status of the subject as an awakened being and living ancestor *(zu).* It also provided his followers with objects that, much like relics, were invested with charisma and could be used either as talismans (to bring good fortune) or icons (to invoke the presence of the master). Possession of a portrait of an eminent master served, moreover, as visible proof of a social or karmic connection between him and the holder. Given this wide range of functions, unless a portrait of a monk is clearly part of a set or otherwise known to have once occupied a mortuary hall, its precise use in the past must remain a matter of conjecture.

Concerning the Religious Meaning of Buddhist Images

Whatever "meaning" a particular image had in the Chinese Buddhist tradition is, I would argue, intimately bound up with its original location and function. Faced with the daunting task of interpreting objects in museum collections, art historians have naturally turned to textual sources, especially Buddhist sutras and commentaries that circulated in Chinese, in an effort to shed light on the significance that the deities and personages portrayed had within the normative tradition. That is a necessary and helpful approach, but it also has serious pitfalls, for there is no guarantee that the people who produced and used a particular image were informed and motivated by, or even cognizant of, the literature and lore consulted by the modern scholar. The degree of relevance that any given textual source has for interpreting the meaning of any given image in its native setting can only be determined by historical research. The first step in such a determination is to locate both the text and the image to which it is hypothetically related in their respective times and

 places in the history of Chinese Buddhism. If the two can be shown to be coextensive, that is, if the ideas found in the text had some currency when and where the image was produced and used, then it is possible that those ideas contributed to the local "meaning" of the work of art. But even then, unless we know what specific functions the image actually served, the evidence of sutras and commentaries could be misleading. Two examples may suffice to illustrate this point.

First, let us consider the case of the lohans, those disciples of the Buddha who figure prominently in early strata of Buddhist sutras and came, in the Mahayana Buddhism of China, to be worshiped in groups of sixteen (or eighteen). If we seek the meaning of the cult of the sixteen lohans in the text *A Record of the Abiding of the Dharma Spoken by the Great Arhat Nandimitra,* translated into Chinese in 654, we find what indeed appears to be its locus classicus, for the names and abodes of the sixteen are spelled out therein.[3] This text, however, explains the significance of the lohans in terms clearly addressed to the Buddhist laity and intended to encourage them to supply the monks with food, clothing, medicines, and other alms. The argument of the text, in brief, is that the sixteen lohans are secretly in attendance whenever lay believers make donations to groups of ordinary monks. This notion renders any monkish assembly much more "worthy of offerings" (*yinggong,* the Chinese translation of "arhat") than would otherwise be the case and makes it a much more fertile "field of merit" *(futian),* thereby greatly increasing the benefits donors may expect to reap from their acts of generosity.

A Record of the Abiding of the Dharma Spoken by the Great Arhat Nandimitra is indeed a valuable source for explaining the interest that Chinese lay Buddhists took in lohans. But it would be a mistake to assume, on the basis of this text, that sets of lohan images were mainly hung in places where monks gathered to receive offerings from the laity. During the Song and Yuan dynasties, sets of lohan images were often enshrined in their own sanctuaries, either in the second stories of monastery gates *(shanmen)* or in separate lohan halls *(luohan tang).* There the lohans were the object of a cult that involved not the laity, but the monks who resided in and administered the affairs of the monastery. Routine (daily, monthly, and annual) offerings were made to the lohans, and the merit realized from these offerings was dedicated to maintaining communal harmony and a reliable supply of foodstuffs for the monastery. Verses for the dedication of merit *(huixiang wen)* recited in conjunction with these rites tell us far more about the meaning of the lohans in this particular monastic setting than does the *Record Spoken by Nandimitra.* The verses show that, from the monks' perspective, lohans were "worthy of offerings" because it was within their power to keep donations of food and other supplies coming in from the laity. This interpretation of the lohans is different from that directed at the laity, but the two are not necessarily contradictory: the two views could well be interpreted in a complementary manner. In any case, both textual sources, the *Record Spoken by Nandimitra* and the verses for the dedication of merit, are valuable for understanding the meaning of lohans for Chinese Buddhists, but neither can be associated in any immediate or necessary way with any particular set of lohan images. Unless we know where the images were located and how they were actually used, we cannot be sure which, if either, of the texts in question gave them meaning.

A second example of the limitations of sutras as sources for guessing the function and interpreting the meaning of Buddhist images can be found in the figure of Amitabha. Art historians routinely refer to the three Pure Land sutras when explaining the place of Amitabha

in Chinese Buddhism, as well they should. Those sutras and the many Chinese commentaries on them were clearly the basis for the widespread belief in Amitabha's Western Paradise and Amitabha's vow to enable all of his devotees to go there upon death. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that all images of Amitabha in medieval China, even if they were in use as icons, were necessarily associated with just the kinds of meditational and devotional practices prescribed in the Pure Land sutras. To cite but one counterexample, it was common in the Song and Yuan dynasties for Buddhist monasteries to maintain "life prolonging halls" *(yanshou tang)* or "nirvana halls" *(niepan tang)*—infirmaries for sick and dying monks—in which images of Amitabha were enshrined as tutelary deities. The purpose of the images was not to aid the devotions of the bedridden, but rather to serve as the focal point of regular offerings and prayers made by the healthy monks who administered the infirmary. What Amitabha was asked to do, not surprisingly given the setting, was to help the sick recover and, failing that, to lead them to rebirth in his Pure Land. The first of those prayers, however, has no basis in the Pure Land sutras. The second might seem to, but it too differs from the practice described in the sutras insofar is it is a third party, not the dying person himself, who calls out to Amitabha. Here again, it is clear that knowledge of the physical settings and ritual functions of images is essential if we are to understand their "meaning" to Chinese Buddhists. Literary sources such as sutras cannot, by themselves, tell the whole story.

Conclusion

It is difficult to determine with any certainty just what religious and social functions works of Chinese Buddhist art served in the past or what they meant to the people who produced and used them when those works are removed from their original settings. The basic problem is that there have never been any absolutely fixed correlations between the appearances (form, style, iconography) of Buddhist images in China and the uses to which they have been put. Appearance is, at best, a rough guide to the suitability of particular types of image for various religious functions, as determined by customary practice in the normative tradition. To ascertain the religious function of a work of Chinese Buddhist art, there is no substitute for observing it in use in its native environment. When circumstances make that impossible, the most we can do is observe the current function of similar objects in Chinese Buddhist circles and use historical documents and archeological evidence to study past uses of similar objects. Such observation and study can provide a frame of reference within which we can make educated guesses about the original settings and functions of pieces now isolated in museums.

Notes

1. Marsha Weidner, ed., *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism 850–1850* (Lawrence, Kan.: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas; Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), 226.
2. Although now described as an album leaf, this painting was probably once a section of a handscroll (ed.).
3. Translated into English in *The Sixteen Arhats and the Eighteen Arhats* (Beijing: Buddhist Association of China, 1961).

2

Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui,* the Buddhist Rite for Deliverance of Creatures of Water and Land

Daniel B. Stevenson

WRITING AT THE END of the eleventh century, the Chan master Changlu Zongze (d. 1107?) observed:

> Professing the desire to ensure peace and harmony, if one does not hold a *shuilu* [rite] one is considered to be without virtue. In the service of one's superiors and elders, if one does not sponsor a *shuilu* one is considered unfilial. If in giving benevolent assistance to the needy and the young one does not hold a *shuilu* one is considered unloving. Hence people with wealth and means will sponsor the rite on their own, while the impoverished will pool their resources and sponsor it collectively. [Tales of] miraculous response connected with these performances are too numerous to relate.[1]

In 1934, nearly a millennium later, the Buddhist cleric Fafang (1904–1951) described a similar state of affairs:

> In every temple of China, although the plaque in the main gate says it is such-and-such Chan temple, once inside the meditation hall one realizes that it has been changed into a hall for chanting sutras and reciting confessionals, or that it has become an inner altar for the *shuilu.* The clerics living there may call themselves Chan monks, but they are really just monks who specialize in rites of penance.[2]

Along with being a very popular rite, the *shuilu fahui* (rite for deliverance of creatures of water and land) is arguably the most spectacular liturgy in the Chinese Buddhist repertoire. From at least the beginning of the Southern Song, larger monasteries made the *shuilu* available to their clientele through permanent chapels known as *shuilu* halls *(shuilu tang* or *yuan).* These structures complemented a well-established tradition of ad hoc *(linshi)* performance that also allowed the rite to be exported to donors' homes, community shrines, and other sites beyond the monastery grounds. Wherever the *shuilu* was held, it involved an enormous outlay

of resources. A seemingly endless stream of clerical officiants, acolytes, and subsidiary staff tended its ritual protocols and altars. Along with the usual equipment for ritual offering (e.g., altar accoutrements, ritual garments), each performance called for the production of three to four thousand handcrafted paper placards, writs and petitions, papier-mâché effigies, and other paraphernalia, most of which were consumed in the course of the rite itself. Special foods had to be supplied as offerings to the deities, while massive quantities of vegetarian fare were needed for the daily feasting *(zhai)* of donors, monastic officiants, and sundry hangers-on. Meanwhile, the confines of the inner altar were themselves covered, wall to wall, with lavish iconographic scrolls (or wall paintings in the case of dedicated *shuilu* halls).

From the initial setting up of the ritual sanctuary to the concluding dismissal of the deities, a *shuilu* typically required seven days to complete. The protocols involved complex layers of activity that took place concurrently at two different sites, the inner altar *(neitan),* which is divided into an upper hall *(shangtang)* and lower hall *(xiatang),* and the outer altar *(waitan).* The core procedure of the *shuilu* is performed at the inner altar. It begins with the ritual securing of the inner altar, after which the enlightened (C. *sheng;* S. *ārya*) assembly of buddhas, bodhisattvas, arhats, and divine guardians of the Three Jewels is summoned into its upper hall and feted with the usual Buddhist offerings *(gongyang)* and supplications. Having assembled the enlightened hosts, the *shuilu* officiants move to the courtyard outside the inner altar. There they dispatch papier-mâché emissaries *(shi)* and "writs of amnesty" to gain the temporary release of creatures under the supervision of the divine ministries of the heavens, atmosphere, earth, and underworld.

This gesture serves as a segue to the most crucial phase of the rite: the sequence during which the unenlightened beings (C. *fan;* S. *pṛthagjana*) of the lower hall are assembled, converted, and feted at the inner altar. The composition of this assembly corresponds in principle to the traditional Buddhist six abodes of samsara. However, their ranks are expanded to accommodate a variety of indigenous cosmological categories, including gods *(shen)* of the Chinese celestial and terrestrial bureaucracies, Daoist immortals, Confucian worthies, emperors and officials, hungry ghosts (C. *egui;* S. *preta*), solitary souls *(guhun),* ancestors, the Ten Kings, and liminoids *(wanghun)* of purgatory. Summoned to the *shuilu* altar, these creatures are first stripped of their defilements through bathing and bestowal of the Buddhist refuges and precepts, then escorted to their respective stations in the inner altar, where they pay homage to the enlightened assembly *(sheng)* of the upper hall and are treated to charitable distributions of food *(shishi)* and Dharma. Having been brought into the salvific fold of the Buddhist Three Jewels, the beings of the lower hall are sent on their way to eventual rebirth in the western Pure Land. Thus the *shuilu* plays out as a rite of universal salvation *(pudu),* its reference to waters *(shui)* and land *(lu)* deriving from the claim to assemble and deliver, en masse, creatures who inhabit the most hard-pressed domains of samsara.

Chinese Buddhist liturgists typically classify the *shuilu* as a rite of food bestowal *(shishi).* This classification comes largely from its connection to the Sutra on the Dhāranī for the Deliverance of the Flaming-Mouth Hungry Ghost, a quasi-esoteric text introduced to China during the early-Tang dynasty, to which the *shuilu* looks as a locus classicus for its basic *topos* of delivering afflicted beings through ritual distributions of food.[3] Much as happened with the Yulanpen Sutra during the medieval period, the Flaming-Mouth Sutra's ritualized feeding of hungry ghosts set up profound resonances with indigenous Chinese mortuary traditions, resulting in its rapid assimilation as a technology for the postmortem transition of deceased kin,

 as well as the pacification of malevolent ghosts *(gui)* who linger beyond the reach of the socially circumscribed ancestral cult. Today the *shuilu* stands with the Rite for Release of the Flaming Mouths *(fang yankou),* a later esoteric offspring of the Flaming-Mouth Sutra, as one of the premier Buddhist rites for the dead, de rigueur not just for Buddhists, but for any Chinese who would properly discharge their obligations to the dead.

Read within such a mortuary framework, the idea of the *shuilu* as a rite for the wholesale deliverance of inhabitants of water and land has been interpreted by most scholars as referring exclusively to departed souls *(wangling; wanghun)*—hence the familiar representation of the *shuilu* (popularized by Johannes Prip-Møller and Holmes Welch) as a "soul mass" or "plenary mass."[4] Although this mortuary cast is a prevalent one, the *shuilu* has historically seen other applications.[5] "Rather than just a means to enable select [kin] to escape purgatory or the turbid [realms] for rebirth in good realms," as one thirteenth-century commentator put it, the rite might just as easily be seen as "directed chiefly to the living"—a Mahayanist technology of compassion and conversion, the powers of which can be directed to a variety of this-worldly ends.[6] Thus we find *shuilu* performances contracted for everything from protection of the nation and timely rain, to the New Year, Cold Food, and Midautumn festivals, and even annual celebrations at local shrines.[7] In this capacity, the *shuilu* comes close to Daoist rites of cosmic renewal *(jiao),* to which it bears a more than casual resemblance.

The remarks of authors such as Changlu Zongze and Fafang suggest that the *shuilu* has been an integral part of the Buddhist ritual economy for well on a thousand years, a notion that finds confirmation in ritual manuals and iconographic paintings that have come down to us from successive generations of *shuilu* practitioners. This same historical record indicates that the *shuilu* tradition was a mainstream Buddhist phenomenon, ensconced squarely among the monastic elite. The rite was included in the repertory of almost every major monastery; Buddhist clergy claimed exclusive authority to serve as officiants at *shuilu* performances; and concern for the rite's promulgation engaged the most orthodox of the clerical leaders, including the likes of Zongze, the Tiantai master Zhipan (ca. 1220–1275), and the Ming-dynasty reformer Yunqi Zhuhong (1535–1615). All of this bespeaks a cultural integrity, of sorts. However, closer scrutiny reveals that *shuilu* traditions were rife with instability and conflict, suggesting that attitudes toward the rite were anything but homogeneous. The ruminations of Zongze and Fafang themselves betray such feelings of ambiguity. Significantly, their disquiet does not arise from reservations about the *shuilu*'s suitability or pedigree as a "Buddhist" rite per se, but from its astonishing popularity—from the surpluses that came with its successful insinuation into the socio-religious fabric of local Chinese communities. The *shuilu* is *too* popular, to the point where the universality of its appeal threatens to render invisible the very boundaries that make Buddhism distinct.

Ambiguity and contradiction are not places that we, with our disciplinary boundaries, necessarily find easy to visit. Yet it is precisely in the challenge to familiar horizons that the discomforts of a phenomenon such as the *shuilu* may prove to be most revealing. Here we have a Buddhist rite that carried the full ideological investments of a professional monastic sangha but at the same time was embedded within an entire network of concerns and normative expectations constituted beyond the monastery wall. Buddhists—and things Buddhist—clearly participated in a diversity of social and religious worlds in China; and to the extent that ritual and art were instrumental to such participation, a rite such as the *shuilu* sheds valuable light on the processes through which those worlds and their interactions took shape.

At yet another level, the heterogeneity within the *shuilu* traditions indicates that the very form and idea of the *shuilu* as a ritual event were themselves subject to ceaseless alteration at the hands of local sponsors. If the *shuilu* as objectified tradition demonstrates this sort of contingency, what does this imply for the *shuilu* at the level of ritual performance? T. Griffith Foulk suggests, in the previous essay, that the identity and function of a given iconographic assemblage are less the product of inherent properties of style than they are the receptive strategies that viewers bring to the object. Since these strategies are historical and may shift with time and competence, meaning and function are also fluid.

Ritualizations such as the *shuilu* were doubtless instrumental to the production and function of Buddhist art, and their study is essential to understanding the patterns of cultural reception that give this ritual art and spectacle its elemental presence. But ritual itself being such a dense social and cognitive event, we might go a step further and consider how the objectifying processes of ritual reception itself—how the very generation of iconographic assemblage and ritual spectacle *as* meaningful object, let alone its identification as something "Buddhist"—might fluctuate both within and across different ritual stagings. Here things get especially interesting, for close scrutiny of art and ritual within historically localized contexts might reveal modes of interaction that are quite different from the ways in which we expect Buddhist art (or religious art in general) to operate.

Pursuant to these concerns, this essay explores the relationships between iconographic assemblage, ritual literature, and liturgical performance in the *shuilu* cult, looking in particular at the ways in which this relationship contributed to constructions of the *shuilu* as ritual *topos* in later imperial China. The first section examines the status of ritual text and ritual painting as documents and agents of *shuilu* culture. The second section uses these materials to construct an episodic history of competing transformations of the *shuilu* rite. In the final two sections I turn more specifically to the *shuilu* iconographic program, connecting it with this history and looking at ways in which function and meaning were constituted within the milieu of the ritual event.

The *Shuilu* Ritual Manuals and Altar Scrolls as Historical Artifacts

Apart from passing references in the larger historical record, knowledge of the *shuilu* in later China comes to us by way of two principal types of artifacts: instructional manuals or litany texts (*yiwen, yigui,* etc.), the contents of which were consulted by the celebrants as a guide for ritual procedure and recitation, and iconographic or ritual paraphernalia, especially iconographic scrolls or murals associated with the *shuilu* ritual sanctuary. Both are documentary artifacts of the *shuilu* rite as well as objects used in its performance and, hence, instrumental to the socio-cultural processes through which *shuilu* ritual traditions were themselves reproduced. This situation raises questions about how we might use these artifacts to reconstruct the *shuilu* ritual and its history. Let us begin by examining some of these implications.

THE *SHUILU* RITUAL MANUALS

Most contemporary performances of the *shuilu* in Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and the People's Republic of China use a six-fascicle manual known as the *Fajie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiuzhai yigui* (Guidelines for performing the purificatory fast of the sublime assembly of saintly and ordinary beings of water and land throughout the Dharmadhātu), or *Shuilu*

 yigui, for short. Yunqi Zhuhong introduced the *Shuilu yigui* on Mount Yunqi in Hangzhou sometime between 1571 and his death in 1615. However, by his own testimony, the text was not his creation but a recodification *(chongding)* of a manual of the same title written about 1260 by Zhipan, author of the monumental *Comprehensive Record of the Buddhas and Patriarchs (Fozu tongji).*[8]

In the absence of Zhipan's original tract, it is difficult to determine how much of the current *Shuilu yigui* owes its shape to Zhuhong.[9] Tiantai doctrinal and liturgical conceits are in evidence, but Zhuhong professes to have reworked the text, and, in certain places, later emendations are clearly present. The content of the *Shuilu yigui* is concerned exclusively with the proceedings of the *shuilu* inner altar, with only passing reference to the parallel activities of the outer altar. Details for the elaborate outfitting of the inner altar—not to mention the production of the numerous written memorials, placards, iconographic scrolls, offerings, and other materials essential to the rite—are not touched upon at all, even though their presence is signaled on every page. Zhuhong's text consists primarily of litanies for recitation, a genre of ritual literature commonly known as *yiwen.* Apart from the most elemental cues of procedure, the details of ritual performance are left to oral instruction.

To supplement the terse *Shuilu yigui,* modern-day *shuilu* practitioners often consult procedural glosses to the text prepared by the late-Qing-period Chan master Yirun Yuanhong. Yirun, a reform-minded abbot of Zhenji Monastery in Hangzhou, claimed to have access to the orthodox *(zheng)* form of these extratextual materials and traditions. Troubled by Zhuhong's lack of procedural instructions *(zuofa),* Yirun composed his glosses with the twofold intention of forestalling local innovation and providing instructions sufficient to allow ad hoc performance by those with minimal access to established oral lore. In 1823, Yirun and his disciples combined these materials with a slightly amended version of Zhuhong's *Shuilu yigui* and published them as the *Shuilu yigui huiben* (Composite text of the *Shuilu yigui;* hereafter, *Huiben*).[10]

The greater part of the *Huiben* is contained under the chapter heading "Procedure for the Ritual Performance Proper" *(zuofa men).* This consists of an emended version of Zhuhong's manual for the inner altar, with extensive supplementary instructions on procedure supplied in subscript. Some nine additional chapters are appended before and after it, revealing an imposing complexity behind procedures that Zhuhong treats in shorthand. Topics include the arrangement of the inner and outer altars *(tangsi men);* recitation and repentance services for the outer altar *(jingchan men);* ritual equipment *(faqi men);* paper placards, effigies, and written directives *(zhizha men);* maintenance of incense burners and lamps *(xiangdeng men);* preparation of vegetarian meals and offerings *(zhaigong men);* production of written memorials, announcements, and amnesties used in the course of the ceremony *(shuji men);* proper content and display of sixty-odd *shuilu* iconographic scrolls *(huashi men)* in the inner altar; and a revealing discussion of attitudes toward financial remuneration of the ritual personnel *(chouxie men).*[11]

Practitioners today also consult two additional works based on Zhuhong's *Shuilu yigui:* the *Shuilu daochang tonglun* (Comprehensive treatise on the s*huilu* rite) and *Shuilu falun baochan* (The precious repentance of the wheel of Dharma [used during the] *shuilu* rite). These were compiled as a set by the Qing layman Zheng Yingfang (alias Zhiguan, d. ca. 1879), an ardent Pure Land devotee and co-proprietor of a family-owned Buddhist publishing house influential in Yangzhou during the late-Qing and Republican periods.[12]

The nine-fascicle *Shuilu tonglun* is primarily a manual for the inner altar, with appended chapters on such topics as preparation of the altars *(tantu),* essentials of orientation *(gangyao),* ritual documents *(wengao),* and iconographic protocols *(xiangshi).*[13] Although patterned closely on the works of Zhuhong and Yirun, whose authority Zheng acknowledges in both the preface and body of his text, his *Tonglun* modifies the orientation of the rite to reflect his particular investment in Huayan and Pure Land teaching.[14] The ten-fascicle *Falun baochan* is concerned exclusively with the outer altar. It is also anomalous from the point of view of prevailing *shuilu* traditions. Deviating sharply from its predecessors, it dispenses with the usual sutra recitations at the six outer altars and offers in their place a single rite of repentance organized around the sequential veneration of the individual scriptural titles that make up the Ming and Qing Buddhist canons.[15]

These three textual traditions, all redacted from Zhuhong's *Shuilu yigui,* constitute the mainstream of *shuilu* ritual literature today. The presence of a number of earlier works, however, lingers indelibly in the collective *shuilu* memory. Two texts bear mention for their effect on Zhuhong and later *shuilu* traditions: the three-fascicle *Shuilu yi*[*wen*] (Ritual text for the rite of water and land; ca. 1071) by the Song layman Yang E (1032–1098), subsequently expanded to four fascicles by the Chan master Changlu Zongze; and the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* (Liturgy for the grand feast of the beings of heaven and earth, the netherworld and the world of the living, water and land) compiled by the Chan master Jiaping Jiexiu (d.u.) in 1480.

Little is known of Yang E's background other than that he was a native of Zizhou in Sichuan (present-day Santai district, northwest of Chengdu), received his *jinshi* degree in 1034, and was an ardent patron of the *shuilu.*[16] He was the author of the earliest verifiable manual for the *shuilu* rite, extracts and a postscript from which are preserved in Zongxiao's *Shishi tonglan* (General survey or compendium on food bestowal) dated 1204.[17] Song sources state that Yang composed the *Shuilu yi* or *Shuilu yiwen* on the basis of oral traditions of his native Sichuan.[18] Zongjian's *Shimen zhengtong* (dated 1237) places this event in the Xining era (1068–1077). Although from a late source, this date is supported by a brief narrative history of the *shuilu* composed and inscribed on stone at Jinshan by Yang E in 1071.[19] Changlu Zongze is said to have "gathered up the different local redactions [of Yang E's *Shuilu yiwen*], emended their contents, and codified them into a single four-fascicle text" in 1097. Doubtless aided by the success of his model code for Chan monasteries *(Chanyuan qinggui),* Zongze's emended *Shuilu yiwen* became the most widely consulted *shuilu* manual of the Song and Yuan periods.[20]

Zhuhong's recodified *Shuilu yigui* gained canonical sanction as part of the *Yunqi fahui* (Collected teachings of Yunqi [Zhuhong]) by the Yongzheng era of the Qing (1723–1735), and possibly well before then. Already by the end of the Ming it was turning up in private catalogues.[21] By contrast, the Yang E and Zongze redactions of the *Shuilu yi*[*wen*] never gained canonical status; the canonical record preserves no trace of them outside of isolated fragments or notices found in such collectanea as the aforementioned *Shishi tonglan.* It would be easy to conclude that these redactions fell into insignificance and all but disappeared from the scene after the Song. However, this was hardly the case, as is demonstrated by the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* by the Ming master Jiexiu.

As described by Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, whose private library holds the only extant version known to date, Jiexiu's *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* is an extensive work of three parts: (1) the three-fascicle *Tiandi mingyang shuilu xiefa* (Procedures for inscribing documents), which provides instructions for the production and use of inscriptions, memorials, writs, and

 other ritual objects; (2) a *futu* (appended illustrations), in one fascicle, which appears to supply details of the altar arrangement and its icons; and (3) the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen,* an eight-fascicle manual for the core protocols of the inner altar. According to Yoshioka, Jiexiu compiled this work in 1480, while serving as abbot of Jiangtian Monastery at Jinshan, the site of the first performance of the *shuilu* rite legendarily sponsored by Emperor Wu of the Liang (r. 502–549). Jiexiu's preface states that he intended to rectify the excesses of an existing *shuilu* manual published by a certain master Mi'an (d.u.) of Gaozuo Monastery in Nanjing. The geographical proximity to Nanjing and Jinshan suggests that the Jiexiu and Mi'an texts were connected with the so-called Jinshan tradition of the *shuilu* that Zhuhong singled out as the target of his ritual reform. Jiexiu's *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* would, therefore, appear to belong to an alternative tradition of *shuilu* practice that was later displaced by the Zhuhong/Zhipan text.[22] Evidence is strong that the Jiexiu and Mi'an manuals constitute a line of textual recension that extends from Zongze. The veil on this neglected corner of the *shuilu* tradition is lifted by the extracanonical record, specifically, some half a dozen printed manuals from Chosŏn dynasty Korea that bear the title *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chae'ŭi* (C. *Tiandi mingyang shuilu zhaiyi*), the earliest and most comprehensive of which was compiled in 1342 (the Yuan dynasty in China).[23]

I have not seen Jiexiu's manual. However, I have seen the *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chae'ŭi pom'ŭm ch'aek chip* (Collection of Brahma-melody tracts for the rite of the feast for heaven and earth, the netherworld and world of the living, water and land), a compendium of miscellaneous *shuilu*-related materials compiled and printed by the Korean monk Chiwon (n.d.) in 1663,[24] which draws selectively on existing ritual tracts.[25] It is a confusing text because it consists of virtually nothing but litanies, with little contextualization or clear segmentation. The collection contains at least five distinct liturgies, the lengths of which range anywhere from one, to three, to five, to seven days. Diagrams of various altar arrangements (all of them rectangular and oriented north to south) are also appended.

Parallels to the Zhipan/Zhuhong *shuilu* are sufficiently strong to confirm that the ritual sequences of the *Pom'ŭm ch'aek chip* are indebted to Chinese *shuilu* traditions, as the title of the *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chae'ŭi pom'ŭm ch'aek chip* Korean text suggests.[26] The question is, Which traditions? Structural similarities notwithstanding, the *Pom'ŭm ch'aek chip* deviates from the Zhipan/Zhuhong text in a number of key ways, especially in the composition of the *shuilu* pantheon and the relative density of certain liturgical segments. Significantly, those same points of difference appear to be shared by Jiexiu's *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yi,* raising the distinct possibility that the Chosŏn dynasty *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chae'ŭi* tracts hark back to Yuan-period recensions of the *shuilu* derived from Zongze and connected with the so-called Jinshan tradition.

The materials surveyed here indicate how closely the ritual culture of the *shuilu* has been tied historically to written text, such texts having been used as both aide de memoire for ritual performance and a means to codify and authorize particular ritual formulations. In this respect, ritual text may be our single most important source for reconstructing *shuilu* traditions and their diverse socio-historical contexts, especially with the impossibility of recovering the living event itself. However, there are likely to be significant differences between the interpretive assumptions that we bring to the *shuilu* manuals in the interest of documentary history and the ways in which these manuals actually functioned within *shuilu* liturgical communities. "By viewing the text as an entity that merely expresses a particular perspective on time,"

Catherine Bell observes with regard to Lingbao Daoist ritual texts, "we may miss how the text is *actor* in those times."[27]

In the main, the *shuilu* manuals comprise litanies for recitation and instructions for physical and mental action, the contents of which are intended for dramatic reproduction. As a literature that realizes much of its functional presence in the form of public oral and visual performance, the modes of signification that it employs may not find a natural equivalent in the sort of analytic scrutiny and systematic "meaning" that we associate with such Buddhist genres as expository treatise and sutra. This is not to even consider the more elemental differences between Chinese Buddhist textual practices and those of our contemporary academic cultures.

At the same time that the *shuilu* manuals constitute themselves through the medium of oral performance, as written text they also have a form and function outside of ritual performance. Being a prescriptive guide for ritual production, the *shuilu* texts subordinate local performance to an overarching and predetermined set of ritual norms, thereby establishing a unifying link between individual *shuilu* performances. One could say that their presence as written text brings into existence a particular idea of ritual as tradition. However, along with text come technologies of reproduction, and these technologies entail operations that further materialize that idea of ritual tradition and transmission in the form of concrete social practice. Through these operations the *shuilu* manuals simultaneously establish their status as officializing source and set the parameters for mediating authority among *shuilu* officiants and their communities.

As one would expect, different redactions of ritual text often show evidence of strategic posturing between different liturgical communities, as in the examples of Zhuhong or Zheng Yingfang. This situation, of course, underscores the historically contingent character of ritual text; but it also tells us that ritual text participates actively in the creation of the very historical and social niches that it occupies. Just as it is problematic to assume that ritual experience takes shape in an idealized realm that we can glimpse transparently through the "window" of ritual text, it is equally perilous to think that ritual text occupies an idealized social and cultural space untouched by the processes of its own historical production. This participation in larger fields of social and cultural practice brings us to a final point of concern, which is consideration of ritual text as both a form of literary practice and an agent of ritual discourse.

The collection of ritual texts described above demonstrates considerable variety, from the spartan and laconic litanies of Yang E to the intensive descriptions of altar arrangement, procedure, and paraphernalia found in Yirun's *Huiben* and Jiexiu's twelve-volume *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen.* Specific differences in their ritual contents aside, however, there are clear continuities in ritual structure as well as in the conventions for setting those structures to literary form.

In the most adumbrated examples, a litanic text *(yiwen)* may consist of little more than hard-to-remember chants, their relative place in the extended ritual sequence indicated through use of such generic markers as offering of flowers and incense *(xianghua gongyang),* invitation of the deities *(zhaoqing),* veneration *(lijing),* confession *(chanhui),* dedication of merits *(huixiang),* vow *(fayuan),* and the like. That such tracts were deliberate abridgements, never intended to provide a full disclosure of ritual procedure, is evident from their frequent resort to a kind of ritual shorthand. Rather than give full-blown instruction for the incense offering, they might simply say "opening homage" or "incense and flowers according to stan-

 dard procedure," thereby dropping a cue opaque to those without the competence to decipher it. Thus, ritual literatures definitely do function within an extended ritual discourse that spreads beyond the confines of text, proper.

In more-expanded ritual tracts, such as Yirun's *Shuilu yigui huiben,* litanies for recitation are typically accompanied by detailed instructions for physical action (e.g., when to bow, where to stand, how to present offerings) and mental visualization or reflection *(guanxiang, yunxiang).* Since at least the Sui and early Tang, it has been standard practice to insert material of this sort in small-character subscript, either adjacent to or beneath the verbal recitations that it is intended to illumine. When confronted with abridged or truncated ritual tracts, one is tempted to seek out the more elaborate texts to fill in their gaps. But this approach presumes a homogeneity of ritual form that can be misleading, unless one is prepared to establish, on historical grounds, that the materials in question are sufficiently connected to constitute a common field of reference.

One of the more commonplace assumptions encountered in scholarship on Chinese Buddhism and Buddhist art is the idea that ritual procedure is generated from the sutras or that it necessarily "expresses and acts out," as Bell puts it, some cohesive message of either scripture or ritual text.[28] This view is patently problematic, as both Bell and the *shuilu* ritual texts indicate. Aside from the single mantra used to empower the food distributions in the rite, or the narrative trope of Emperor Wu's mythic encounter with the Flaming-Mouth Sutra, the *shuilu* owes little to the Flaming-Mouth Sutra in the way of specific ritual content. Much the same can be said for the later *fang yankou* rite. Their formal procedures, litanies, and sequences of spells are drawn entirely from extratextual ritual repertories. As with most Buddhist ritual genera in China, the *shuilu* (and the *fang yankou*) achieved ritual articulation not by deference to any singular scriptural or traditionary source, but by a kind of modular assembling of liturgical forms drawn from a larger, extratextual field of ritual conventions. When viewed in conjunction with those fields, the rites take on nuances that go well beyond the root sutra.[29]

SHUILU ICONOGRAPHIC PAINTINGS AND RITUAL PARAPHERNALIA

Although written text holds a significant place in *shuilu* tradition, some of the earliest references to the rite come by way of a different medium, painting. From the outset, this pictorial record appears to have involved two basic forms: murals in dedicated *shuilu* chapels and portable scrolls that could be deployed for ad hoc performances. The Buddhist painter Zhang Nanben, active in Sichuan during the latter half of the ninth century, is known to have produced a set of 120 iconographic scrolls for a *shuilu* altar at Baoli Monastery in Chengdu.[30] The sources for this notice are not significantly earlier than Yang E's manual and inscription, but if the attribution is valid, Zhang's *shuilu* paintings predated the first solid mention of a *shuilu* ritual manual by nearly a century and a half. This chronology raises interesting questions about the relative primacy of literary, visual, and dramatic elements in the development of the *shuilu* rite. Contrary to our usual proclivity for the written word, could it be that visual and choreographic media were the more central impetuses in the formation of the *shuilu* cult? Could it be that the prompt-text originated as a mnemonic aid for a tradition that was largely oral and performative and only achieved its status as officializing text when the cult gained the attention of the national sangha and imperial court?

When the *Shuilu yi*[*wen*] of Yang E and Zongze appeared in the late-eleventh century,

the iconography of the *shuilu* altar was already an established topic of concern. In 1093, Su Shi (1037–1101) composed a set of eighteen verses *(zan)* to accompany the iconographic scrolls used in a *shuilu* service for his recently departed wife, Wang Fu.[31] Their content closely matches Yang's manual, which is not surprising given the common connection with Sichuan that Su and Yang shared. Zongjian reports in the *Shimen zhengtong* that in Zongze's day, also the late-eleventh century, liturgists of central and southeastern China typically employed as many as 120 altar images *(xiang)*.[32] When Zhipan published his *Shuilu yigui* in the thirteenth century, he is said to have devised a set of sixty *shuilu* scrolls to circulate with the ritual text.[33]

By and large, wherever we find mention of the *shuilu* ritual literature and its history, the iconography of the inner altar is an integral part of the discussion. This pattern holds not only for Zhuhong, Yirun, and Zheng Yingfang, who stand within a common textual tradition, but for less obvious examples as well, such as Jiexiu's *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* or the local *shuilu* tradition sponsored by the Mingzhou statesman Shi Hao (1106–1194), upon which Zhipan drew. Jiexiu, Yirun, and Zheng Yingfang go so far as to include chapters on the altar scrolls in their manuals. Zhuhong does not, but in his *Shuilu yiwen,* a short essay in which he justifies his publication of the Zhipan text, he shows himself to be as concerned about visual image as about textual orthodoxy and ritual orthopraxy. Ritual iconography seems to have held a place in the *shuilu* traditionary *imaginaire* fully equal to that of text. But if ritual text entails such special problems of hermeneutic, what of the visual record and its relation to text and to the larger field of *shuilu* ritual performance and sociality?

Interest in the *shuilu* visual record is a fairly recent development. In the late 1980s, Caroline Gyss-Vermande identified two partial sets of *shuilu* hanging scrolls in the collection of the Musée Guimet: a set of thirty-three scrolls (expanded to thirty-five by additional acquisitions in 1990) dated by inscription to 1454 and a set of seventy-four dated on stylistic grounds to the nineteenth century.[34] Another set, published in 1985 and now in the Shanxi Provincial Museum, consists of 139 *shuilu* scrolls commissioned by the Ming court between 1449 and 1460 for use at Baoning Monastery (Shanxi).[35] In all three sets, cartouches identify the iconographic contents of scrolls and provide cues for their placement in the ritual sanctuary.

It appears that only the Baoning Monastery scrolls identify themselves as having been produced specifically for use in the *shuilu* rite.[36] The Musée Guimet sets seem to have been identified as "*shuilu* paintings" chiefly on the basis of iconographic similarities to the Baoning Monastery scrolls. This is certainly the case for another recent *shuilu* find: a series of murals at the Pilu Monastery (Hebei) published in 1984.[37] The building in question lies on the monastery's central north-south axis, directly behind the Shakyamuni Hall. It is a rectangular structure, its four walls covered by groups of figures organized into three registers. Buddhist protector deities (e.g., the ten *vidyārāja*), Indian gods such as Indra and Brahma, bodhisattvas and saintly monks, the Jade Emperor, and select Chinese stellar deities occupy the hall's north or rear wall. Gods of the Chinese celestial and terrestrial pantheons, various immortals (C. *xian;* S. *ṛṣi*), the Ten Kings of Hell, and related bodhisattva saviors (e.g., Dizang) appear along the middle sections of the side walls. Chinese cultural heroes and historical figures, common folk, hell dwellers, and destitute "solitary souls" occupy the southern (front) end of the hall. The figures are arranged into distinct thematic groups identified by cartouche, much as in the Baoning Monastery and Musée Guimet paintings.

A stele (erected in 1535) in the monastery compound indicates that the murals were

 probably painted in 1342, when the monastery underwent major renovation and expansion. The authors of the 1984 Pilu Monastery publication refer to this rear hall as the "Vairocana Hall," ostensibly because the inscription records that it once contained a central image of Vairocana Buddha. The murals are identified on the basis of their iconographic content as "belonging to the 'water-and-land genre of painting,' " an identification picked up and elaborated in subsequent discussions of the Pilu Monastery.[38] Gyss-Vermande notes that "the authors could have been more precise on the point that this *shuilu* [style of painting] was associated with a ritual that was quite syncretic, 'the feast/fast for the beings of water and land' *(shuilu zhai)*. . . . The organization of the decor of the rear hall corresponds perfectly (in point of fact) to that adopted for the mobile paintings that were used to delimit the sacred space during the course of this ritual." Michel Strickmann carries the association to its conclusion by suggesting that "it was in this special building that one carried out the core ceremonies for the rite of water and land at the monastery."[39] And yet, the epigraphic and gazetteer records for Pilu Monastery give no indication that the building and its murals were used for the *shuilu* rite, let alone that the building was identified as a "*shuilu* hall." This identification devolves purely from iconographic and stylistic considerations: if it is cosmological in its scope and has hierarchically grouped Buddhist, Daoist, Confucian, vernacular human, and spectral figures with identifying cartouches, it must be "the *shuilu*."

If am hesitant here, it is not because I think that the identification with the *shuilu* is necessarily wrong; quite the contrary. Despite discrepancies in their figural repertories, the Baoning Monastery, Musée Guimet, and Pilu Monastery paintings *are* strikingly consistent, not only with one another, but also with the pantheons found in the Korean *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chae'ŭi* tracts; this consistency suggests a historical affiliation with the Jinshan *shuilu* tradition and the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen.* Where I find problems with this approach is in the move from the abstract domain of style and iconography to the broader social economy of Buddhist ritual art. The historical record itself makes it abundantly clear that rites such as the *shuilu,* although structured, were anything but insular. The manuals and scrolls themselves show that there was considerable diversity and, even, tension within *shuilu* traditions. Add to this the vicissitudes of performance and audience—let alone the entire issue of symbolic capital—and it becomes even more difficult to pronounce unilaterally on the rite's form and significance. However, the idea of a *shuilu* iconography is complicated by problems of a more particular sort: the so-called *shuilu* scrolls and murals describe a vision of the cosmos generic to Buddhist circles in the later imperial period. At least three other Buddhist rites as popular as the *shuilu* worked their magic in a similar visual idiom: the *Liang huang chan* (repentance of the Liang emperor) or *cibei daochang chanfa* (repentance of the altar of compassion), the *cibei sanmei shui chan* (repentance of the waters of the samadhi of compassion), and the *jinguangming chanfa* or *gongtian yi* (golden light rite of repentance, or offering to the gods). All involved a dyadic altar arrangement of saintly and mundane offering stations, with altar placards and cosmographic iconography to support it. This generic vision not only raises the question as to whether a given "*shuilu*-style" assemblage was intended for use in the *shuilu,* but also raises the possibility that a given hall or set of scrolls might double for a number of different ritual functions.

There is historical evidence to support the notion of such polyvalence. For example, the *Zengxiu jiaoyuan qinggui,* a monastic code for Tiantai public monasteries influential in the Yuan and Ming periods, specifically states that the *yulanpen* assembly—and here they *do* mean

the traditional *ullambana* offering to the monastic sangha—may be performed either on the steps of the monastery's "repentance hall" or "in its *shuilu* hall."[40] By the same token, we know that the buddha halls and dharma halls situated on the central axis of major monasteries were also used for a variety of functions, including rites of blessing for the imperial family, celebration of the birthdays of specific buddhas and bodhisattvas, New Year rites of offering to the local gods, Ghost Festival offerings, and rites for major donors (including the *shuilu*).[41] The "Vairocana Hall" of the Pilu Monastery is an interesting case in point. That it stands on the monastery's central axis poses something of a problem for its identification as a *shuilu* hall; most dedicated *shuilu* halls I have encountered have been in either the eastern or western quadrants of the monastery.[42] This is not to say that *shuilu* rites were not performed in this "Vairocana Hall," or even that the hall was not designed with *shuilu* in mind, but decor alone is not enough basis for this determination, much less for fleshing out the site's historical significance.[43]

These caveats aside, properly contextualized, *shuilu* paintings offer an invaluable resource for illumining the historical development and internal dynamic of the *shuilu* ritual culture. At the very least, their iconographic repertories can alert us to significant shifts in the composition of the *shuilu* pantheon and, possibly, to the ideological tenor of the rite itself. Moreover, as a visual medium, they foreground aspects of *shuilu* ritual tradition and performance, such as the element of spectacle, that might be inaccessible through the written manuals alone. Of the aural and oral dimensions it is more difficult to speak, their record being lost to us. But the visual protocols and aesthetic effect of the *shuilu* altar—the generative ground on which the performance itself is choreographed—may put us in closer touch with the *shuilu* as ritual experience than does the neatly scripted *shuilu* ritual text.

Even here we have to tread with caution. As Strickmann observes, the *shuilu* performance devolves "as a total spectacle of theater." Despite our efforts to seize and analyze its constituent members, "as ritual, it resists such hair-splitting reductionism, . . . and in its totality, stands curiously greater than the sum of its parts."[44] Ritual text and ritual image are enduring artifacts of *shuilu* cult, and as the default relics of *shuilu* history, we have no choice but to rely on them. However, there is a cruel irony in the fact that both text and painting may have received only minimal attention in the course of the ritual itself. Along with the intangibles of music, chant, recitation, choreography, food, and smell, the ritual protocols of the *shuilu* centered on the manipulation of objects crafted out of paper and destroyed either during the rite or at its conclusion. In privileging ritual text and image, we run the risk of skewing their ratio of significance within the actual ritual process.

Contours of *Shuilu* History

Neatly packaged as it appears here, this collection of *shuilu* texts and paintings easily assumes the guise of a monolithic *shuilu* tradition, perhaps even suggesting a structured system of transmission akin to those seen in certain Daoist and esoteric Buddhist ritual cycles. The problem is not lessened by the fact that the literature itself employs the trope of a text-centered transmission to foster just such a perception of cohesion and continuity. Nearly every *shuilu* manual (and even the subsidiary documents) rehearses the history of the *shuilu* rite, usually in the form of a narrative that centers squarely on the genesis, transmission, and redaction of the *shuilu* ritual text. Frequently the nodes of that history celebrate the same figures whose works are

enshrined in the contemporary *shuilu* canon: Emperor Wu of the Liang, Yang E, Zongze, Su Shi, Zhipan, and the like. The thread that binds them together is the *imaginaire* of a singular orthodox *(zheng)* and originary *(gu)* textual tradition.

Ritual in and of itself involves a historicizing of action—a "strategic reproduction of the past," as Catherine Bell puts it, that serves to "maximize domination of the present" by its very insistence on reiteration. With this privileged status as *traditum,* a comparable authority comes to those who, as the keepers of ritual lore, appropriate that history. In the case of oral traditions this may hinge primarily on individual reputation—the proven ability of that person to fulfill community expectations of proper ritual performance. However, when ritual traditions are recast in the form of liturgical text (or iconographic tableau), authority shifts to those who control access to and interpretation of the ritual literature.[45] Text and its narrative history become the new officializing idiom, their presence ritualized and mystified in ways not dissimilar to the rite itself. In the case of the *shuilu,* access to its manuals or the privilege to undertake the rite has never entailed a formal initiatory structure per se. But manipulation of the prompt-text and its historical narrative was nonetheless instrumental in creating the authority of the clerical officiant and putting into place the social mechanisms for a continuing *shuilu* tradition. Indeed, there is no better demonstration of the normative thrust of this redactive history than the fact that its contents were themselves ritually rehearsed as an integral part of the *shuilu* performance.[46]

This kind of narrative homogeneity easily lends itself to replication in scholarship. The nature of the source materials to some measure makes this unavoidable,[47] but the point here is not to bemoan the impossibility of extracting an objective history of the *shuilu* from such normatively ramified sources. In fact, we may have far more to gain by considering the economy of these texts as normatively ramified documents. Many were compiled as guides not only to *shuilu* practice, but to *correct* practice. As historically specific textualizations that sought to authorize specific representations of *shuilu* practice, the manuals bear the rhetorical imprint of the very traditions they sought to displace. In these traces of rupture and contest, we have the promise of insight into the historical dynamic of *shuilu* ritual traditions and their art. Below I look at selected examples of this dialogically effected literature, giving particular attention to the way in which ritual text and tradition were shaped locally in response to shifting clientele and horizons of ritual expectation.

APOCRYPHAL BEGINNINGS AND THE JINSHAN TRADITION

The earliest records that we have of the *shuilu* (none predating the Song) trace the origins of the rite to Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty, a figure revered by Chinese Buddhists as a paragon of Buddhist sovereignty on the order of the Indian emperor Asoka. Engrossed by the question of how to pacify the restless spirits of his realm, Emperor Wu is said to have been visited in a dream by a divine monk who informed him of the existence of "a grand purificatory feast for [the beings of] water and land, the performance of which was capable of universally delivering beings from the torments of the six destinies." At the urging of the thaumaturge Baozhi (d. 514), the emperor searched through the pages of the Buddhist canon until he happened upon the Sutra on the Dhāranī for the Deliverance of the Flaming-Mouth Hungry Ghost. Convinced that this was the scriptural foundation for the rite in question, the emperor used it to compose a formal liturgy and accompanying manual dubbed the *Shuilu yiwen* (Rite for the beings of water and land). The rite is said to have been performed for the first time

in 505 C.E. at Zexin Monastery on Jinshan island, with the Vinaya specialist and bibliographer Sengyou serving as chief celebrant.

These same Song-period sources go on to claim that the *shuilu* rite fell into disuse, all but disappearing following the collapse of the Liang dynasty, only to resurface again through divine revelation during the Xianheng era (670–673) of the Tang. As the story goes, a Chang'an meditation master by the name of Daoying (d.u.) was visited by the father of the First Emperor of Qin, who revealed to him the existence of the *shuilu* manual in the hope of gaining deliverance from the purgatorial netherworld of Mount Tai. Apprised of its location in a local monastery, Daoying recovered the text and revived the rite's performance, delivering the Qin ghosts from purgatory and healing the traumas of Qin in the process.[48]

Both accounts are most certainly apocryphal. They appear for the first time in Yang E's *Shuilu dazhai lingji ji* (Record of the numinal traces of the grand feast of water and land) and three-fascicle *Shuilu yi*[*wen*].[49] Liang-period and early-Tang sources do, indeed, represent Emperor Wu as a great sponsor of Buddhist ritual and architect of a Buddhist system of ceremonial intended to replace traditional Chinese rites of state. Of particular note are the massive "unrestricted Dharma assemblies" *(wuzhe fahui)* that he periodically convened in the capital at Jinling (Nanjing), events to which later *shuilu* literature often alludes.[50] However, in none of these early records of Emperor Wu's ritual activities do we find mention of a *"shuilu"* rite or manual, let alone any episode reminiscent of the one recounted above.[51] More telling still is the impossibility of any connection between Emperor Wu of Liang and the Sutra on the Dhāranī for the Deliverance of the Flaming-Mouth Hungry Ghost, since the sutra was not known to the Chinese before its translation by Amoghavajra and Śikṣānanda in the eighth century.[52]

The tale of Daoying's revelation from the ghosts of Qin presents similar problems. The rudiments of the story appear in Zanning's biography of Daoying in *Song Biographies of Eminent Monks* (ca. 988). However, Zanning makes no mention whatsoever of the *shuilu* rite, let alone the event's being an occasion for the introduction of a major Buddhist liturgy.[53] As a whole, Buddhist and secular records prior to the tenth century are conspicuously silent on the existence of a *shuilu* rite or a *shuilu* ritual manual.[54] This silence would suggest that the *shuilu* rite and its origin narrative—as we know them today—emerged simultaneously into the historical limelight sometime between the late Tang and the Northern Song. To understand the thrust of this narrative, we have to look to its rhetorical economy during this period, not earlier.

Many of the earliest Song accounts of the *shuilu* are connected in one way or another with Jinshan, the island in the lower Yangzi where Emperor Wu is alleged to have convened the first *shuilu* performance. Significantly, these records stem from a period that saw a surge in popularity of Emperor Wu and Baozhi as cult figures and witnessed the first emergence of Jinshan as a Buddhist center of national prominence.[55] Liang- and Sui-period texts record little in the way of Buddhist activity at Jinshan, let alone the existence of a Zexin Monastery. Although known to Buddhist hermits during the Tang, a sizeable monastic complex did not develop on the island until it came under the active patronage of the Song emperor Zhenzong (r. 998–1022) about 1021. Officially named Zexin Monastery by Zhenzong himself,[56] expansion came rapidly in the decades that followed. Other developments were afoot as well. The earliest stele inscription that we have from Jinshan concerns the rebuilding of the monastery's "*shuilu* hall" *(shuilu tang),* one of the first edifices to be constructed after fire wracked the

complex in 1048.[57] Yang E's celebrated stele recounting the origins of the *shuilu* rite was itself erected at Jinshan in 1072, about the same time that the Chan master Foyin Liaoyuan (1032–1098), an ardent sponsor of the rite, served as abbot there.[58] Thus the institutionalization of the *shuilu* rite at Jinshan, the emergence of Yang E's Jinshan- and Emperor Wu–centered *shuilu* mythology, and the national sponsorship of Jinshan as a Buddhist institution all come together during the latter half of the eleventh century. It is also at this juncture that the ritual tradition itself undergoes its first real literary codification.

From whence the Jinshan *shuilu* tradition arose remains open to speculation. However, many of the earliest references point to Sichuan. Zhang Nanben, the late-ninth-century painter of *shuilu* scrolls mentioned above, was active in the Chengdu area of Sichuan. Yang E's three-fascicle *Shuilu yiwen,* the first verifiable manual for the rite, claims to derive from Sichuan (Shu) ritual masters whose tradition was "closest to its original or ancient form."[59] Claims for the primacy of this Sichuan tradition are echoed by both Su Shi and Changlu Zongze.[60] However, Sichuan was clearly not the only region that was host to the *shuilu* form or some protoype of it. Yang, Su, and Zongze all acknowledge that "adultered and expanded" versions of the rite prospered in other reaches of China as well.[61] This perception is corroborated by the influential Zhejiang masters Yongming Yanshou (904–975) and Ciyun Zunshi (964–1032), who speak of local rites based on the Flaming-Mouth Sutra that entailed offerings of food to hungry ghosts and other sundry beings under the name *shuilu.*[62]

From the evidence at hand, we can only conclude that the particular *shuilu* tradition that rose to prominence in conjunction with Jinshan during the late eleventh century—the tradition that dominates the Song written record from this point on—was not a cataclysmic invention, but a gradual hegemonic consolidation that took shape as one localized version of an extended proto-*shuilu* cultus moved from margin to center. A number of factors were likely involved here, from the popularization of the Jinshan/Emperor Wu *topos* and the spread of Buddho-Daoist motifs of purgatory and "food bestowal" to the special appeal that the "Sichuan" *shuilu* held for educated literati and monks.[63] Also not to be overlooked is the geographical centrality of Jinshan. Lying at the juncture of the Yangzi River and the Grand Canal, the island provided a perfect focal point for dissemination of cult practices to and from different reaches of the empire.[64]

As amorphous as the *shuilu* may have been during the Five Dynasties and early-Song periods, the enshrinement of the "Sichuan" tradition at Jinshan altered the ritual landscape irrevocably, resulting in a widespread reorientation of regional *shuilu* practices to the Jinshan mythos and model. Southern Song sources show a marked increase in the visibility of the *shuilu* rite, with Jinshan playing the leading role as its mythic and cultic center. Dedicated essays on the *shuilu* appear for the first time in Buddhist compendia such as Zongxiao's *Shishi tonglan* (1204), Zongjian's *Shimen zhengtong* (1237), and Zhipan's *Fozu tongji* (ca. 1269). Neo-Confucian *daoxue* authors routinely attack the *shuilu* in their treatises on family ritual. And Buddhist temple records reveal that, by the Southern Song, most of the famous Chan, Tiantai, and Vinaya monasteries boasted permanent *shuilu* chapels reminiscent of one "rebuilt" at Jinshan in 1048.[65]

One of the more telling indicators of the *shuilu*'s growing popularity during this period is the frequency with which it turns up in popular tales. A look through Hong Mai's *Yijian zhi* (dated 1161 to 1198) has, so far, yielded some dozen episodes in which the *shuilu* rite is mentioned by name.[66] Virtually all of them deal with ghosts and mortuary motifs; some carry

apotropaic overtones, such as the aversion of natural disaster, ill health, and misfortune through ritual pacification of the dead. Typically at issue is the plight of newly deceased kin who are in the process of negotiating the purgatorial state (C. *zhongyin;* S. *antarābhava*) between rebirths or else the dispossessed souls who, by dint of their obsessions, linger as liminoids on the margins of the human world. Monasteries with regular facilities for performance of the *shuilu* are the usual setting, with wealthy merchants and officials or extended community groups functioning as the ritual sponsors. Jinshan itself makes occasional appearances as a center of *shuilu* performance especially sought after for its efficacy.

GLIMPSES OF THE *SHUILU* IN LATER IMPERIAL CHINA

By the end of the Northern Song, the monastic complex at Jinshan was firmly established as the mythic center and point of origin of the *shuilu* cult. While this primacy undoubtedly lent the monastery a certain air of authority in the eyes of *shuilu* patrons, it did not necessarily translate into a unified *shuilu* tradition as social fact. In lieu of any formal system of ritual transmission and hieratic sanction (the Baoshan liturgical institute of the Qing being a late exception), both the native Jinshan tradition and its regional derivatives continued to transform freely in response to local social and religious needs. When large-scale social change brought exposure to hitherto neglected groups or regions, it was unavoidable that new reinscriptions of margin and center would emerge.

One of the more dramatic examples of this reshaping of the *shuilu* in response to changing liturgical interests is Yunqi Zhuhong's recodification in the late Ming. Zhuhong and his junior contemporary Ouyi Zhixu (1599–1655) were two of the most influential Buddhist reformers of the time. In their tracts on the *shuilu,* both speak routinely—and disapprovingly—of a "northern" or "Jinshan" tradition of *shuilu,* the excesses of which Zhuhong specifically set out to redress through republication of Zhipan's thirteenth-century *Shuilu yigui.*[67] In a postscript to this new manual, Zhuhong characterizes the "Jinshan" rite and text:

> The order of the Jinshan text is filled with errors and intrusions, making it impossible to find the central thread that unites [the rite] from beginning to end. When monks perform [the ceremony] it ends up being done according to their personal whims, differing slightly with each person. . . . Moreover, people who sponsor the setting up of [*shuilu*] altars expend enormous money and resources, sometimes taking months or even years before they are finally ready. . . . [When the rite is performed], men and women, young and old come jostling one another in a steady stream, as though they were going to some vulgar event as the setting out of the flags or the observance of spring. Male and female mingle feet and rub elbows, mixing with one another in total confusion. In a given day they may contribute a thousand [cash], but they still cannot avoid blaspheming the saints and worthies and offending the ghosts and spirits. Thus their failings are many and transgressions grave. Instead of merit they reap the seeds of misfortune. Many come to the altar site but do not stay to [the rite's] completion, thereby fostering evil retribution [in lives to come]. It is truly frightful![68]

As used here, the labels "Jinshan text" and "Jinshan tradition" smack of rhetorical license, making it difficult to determine to which liturgical community or communities, if any,

 Zhuhong might be referring. Zhixu narrows the field to "Jinshan abbots of the Song and Yuan," whom he accuses of "currying popularity with the vulgar and [bedazzling] the eyes and ears of upper-class men and women through [elaborate] rites of offering."[69] We know that the Yuan imperium sponsored a series of elaborate *shuilu* ceremonies at Jinshan, the form of which appears to have been replicated at Dadu (Beijing), the Yuan capital, and, on a smaller scale, at various local temples of the realm.[70] Over the first two decades of the fourteenth century, some half a dozen such convocations were held at Jinshan alone. Emperor Chengzong organized the first during the Dade era (1297–1307), with the Chan master Yuansou Xingduan (1255–1341) serving as chief liturgist.[71] Three took place under the direction of Chan master Yingshen (d.u.), one in 1309, just after Emperor Wuzong appointed him as abbot of Jinshan, and two more in 1314 and 1315.[72] Another followed in 1322, with Chan master Yuejiang Zhengyin presiding.[73]

The precedent of sponsoring massive *shuilu* ceremonies on behalf of the imperial household and state was apparently strong enough to withstand the collapse of the Yuan, for it was picked up directly by the early-Ming emperors, this time in the form of a series of "unrestricted assemblies" and "ceremonies of broad offering to the dead" *(guangjian fahui)* convened at state monasteries on Mount Jiang just outside the southern capital of Nanjing. The first two unrestricted assemblies, convened by Ming Taizu in 1368 and 1369, were directed by Chushi Fanqi (1296–1370), a Dharma successor to Yuansou Xingduan, the monk who organized the first of the Jinshan *shuilu* rites sponsored by the Yuan.[74] The following year, these unrestricted assemblies were supplanted by annualized *guangjian* ceremonies, which mainly took place on Mount Jiang or in the capital. In both cases, the *shuilu* continued to hold central place in the ritual proceedings. The head celebrants were drawn from disciples of Yuansou Xingduan and Chushi Fanqi, a line with strong links to Jinshan.[75]

As a whole, these events bespeak a patron-client relationship between the Jinshan abbacy and the Yuan and early-Ming courts that fits well with Zhixu's description cited above. Indeed, all of these imperial convocations were extravagant in the extreme, involving a lavish outlay of food, rare incenses, precious gems, special brocades, and other material resources that took months to prepare. Yuansou Xingduan's benedictory address for the Dade-era ceremony describes a seven-day rite directed by dozens of renowned clerics drawn from across the realm (the usual number, according to Yuan documents, was about forty), with a supporting entourage of some fifteen hundred additional monks. This figure did not include the countless additional clerics, imperial kin, court dignitaries, and hangers-on who came to see and be seen at the spectacle. Some ceremonies lasted as long as three months, their proceedings organized around repeated performance of the *shuilu* or additional ritual sequences incorporated into the matrix of activities.[76]

Sheer scale not withstanding, the patron-client connection between Jinshan and the imperium surely led to modifications in the form and thrust of the Jinshan *shuilu.* Documents connected with the state *shuilu* ceremonies of the Yuan and Ming show two characteristic threads of concern: one is the publication—through ritual auspices—of the imperial household's divine prerogative as holder of the Mandate of Heaven and sovereign of all under Heaven; the other, pacification of the restless dead and the healing of hidden traumas suffered in the course of natural and human catastrophe. We cannot be sure how closely the Korean *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chae'ŭi* manuals reflect developments associated with court-sponsored traditions of the Yuan and Ming. However, they and the Baoning Monastery scrolls

give striking prominence to deities and structures of the indigenous Chinese celestial and terrestrial bureaucracies, not to mention members of the royal family and exemplary figures from the official history of Chinese dynastic succession. Given the *shuilu* rite's long-standing mythical and rhetorical connection to the "unrestricted or unimpeded assemblies" of the Buddhist rulers Asoka and Emperor Wu, it is not difficult to envision how the rite might be enlisted as a vehicle of imperial ideology. With its hierarchical assembling of all the known creatures of the universe, the *shuilu* "inner altar" becomes the replica of "all that lies beneath Heaven" and, by implication, the simulacrum for restructuring any relationship that might pertain there. The drama of universal salvation and renewal that unfolds within its confines likewise resonates seamlessly with the rhetorical and symbolic conceits of the imperial charge, as one *shuilu* benedictory prayer puts it: to "upwardly support and protect the august purpose of our sovereign emperor and, downwardly, nurture and increase the foundation of our people."[77] In fact, "universal salvation of all beings" here constitutes less an obliteration of differences in nirvanic transcendence than a hierarchical reinscribing of those differences around that transcendent *imaginaire* as the apex from which power and legitimacy in all forms are held to flow. At the same time that it foregrounds the Buddhist Dharma as the foundational order behind human events, it establishes the authority of the imperial and monastic systems that serve as its mediators. The domain of death and the dead folds into that of the living and concerns for world order and renewal.

The connection between imperial use of the *shuilu* and pacification of the dead comes as a corollary to the idea that normalization of the worlds of the visible and the invisible, the living and the dead, is a continuous process. Because these two realms are inherently connected, the emperor's charge to pacify "all under Heaven" by definition extends beyond the human polity to any and all domains of the occult that bear on the world order. The restless dead, especially those bereft of proper burial as a result of war or natural calamity, were one such unseen but potent force. Renowned for its power to deliver beings whom, as one Ming tract puts it, "the usual rites of ancestral offering are unable to reach," the *shuilu* was the perfect technology for extending imperial influence into the hidden realm.[78]

Echoing the emperor's professed desire to bring peace to the realm, Yingshen tellingly characterizes the Jinshan rites of 1314 and 1315 as ceremonies for "delivering those who have fallen [in battle] and descended to the [Yellow] springs, unable to effect the means of their own salvation."[79] The two Ming rites led by Chushi Fanqi in 1368 and 1369, as well as the *guangjian* ceremonies that followed, are described in strikingly similar language.[80] Thus, in the grand state-sponsored ceremonies of the Yuan and Ming, we see a continuation of the *shuilu*'s prevailing role as a vehicle for pacification of the dead coupled with an explicit deflection toward issues of imperial sovereignty, the ideological and symbolic idiom of which found an immediate resonance in the rite's own internal program.

The *guangjian* ceremony of the Ming may have been the most spectacular expression of state interest in the Jinshan *shuilu.* However, it was by no means the only state-sponsored form of the rite, nor even the most visible one. As is well known, the Ming imperium sought early on to bring the Buddhist sangha under centralized supervision by incorporating it into the Ministry of Rites. Along with the usual desire for control, a key aim of this project was to use the clergy's presence in local communities to promote spiritual blessings and the moral transformation of the populace. Part of this system entailed the creation of a category of evangelical *(jiao* or *yujia)* cleric, whose specialized function it was to indoctrinate the laity through

liturgical service. As one might expect, rites for the dead became an important part of the *jiao* monks' repertoire, with the *shuilu* and *yankou* liturgies assuming special prominence.[81] Ultimately the system did not work as neatly as it was described on paper, but it did have a number of powerful long-term effects. One was to embed the *yankou* and *shuilu* rites deeply into the liturgical cycle of local communities; another was to shift the financial and material base of the sangha increasingly to ritual service.[82] The situation—or, at least, the perception—that resulted was much like the one described by Zhuhong and conveyed in certain Ming and Qing novels: the *yankou* and *shuilu* rites became a regular clerical commodity, contracted—for a per diem fee—by laity as an expected part of funerary mourning, with the performance itself unfolding as a cynical expression of clerical venality and grotesque display of wealth and social status.[83]

Given Zhuhong's disapproval of this "vulgarization" of Buddhist ritual, it seems feasible to read his "Jinshan text and tradition" as referring to this broader current of state-sponsored *shuilu* practice rather than the royal Jinshan performances per se. As to the actual form and identity of the "Jinshan text," Zhuhong's *Shuilu yigui* appears to have so successfully displaced it as to banish it almost entirely from historical memory. However, Jiexiu's fifteenth-century *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* is a likely candidate for this text. Jiexiu's service as abbot at Jinshan and the close connection of his text to Nanjing seem to place him squarely within this Yuan-Ming imperial tradition. That the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* was significant during the late-Ming and Qing periods is corroborated by Zheng Yingfang, who lists its alongside Zhuhong's text in his own works on the *shuilu.*[84]

FROM MARGIN TO CENTER: ZHIPAN AND THE YUEBO TRADITION

The text through which Zhuhong sought to reform the *shuilu* cult was, of course, the six-fascicle *Shuilu yigui* of the Tiantai master Zhipan. By Zhuhong's own testimony, the *Shuilu yigui* was a minor work virtually unknown outside the immediate region of southern Zhejiang. When he chose to advance it in lieu of the Jinshan rite, he in effect rejected the charisma of established tradition in preference for a highly marginalized version of the rite. Unable to argue for the *Shuilu yigui* on traditionary grounds (Zhipan's text was undeniably a local product, twice removed from Jinshan), Zhuhong turned to the next best thing: superiority of form and intent. The features that commended Zhipan's text as superior were "its purity [of focus], high mystery, perfect [dramatic] segmentation, and ease [of performance]"—in short, its ability to look and function as a Buddhist rite should in Zhuhong's eyes. Key among these features was the manual's "balance of recited word *(ci)* and conceptual (or moral?) message *(li)*."[85]

That Zhuhong found the *Shuilu yigui* compelling is not coincidental, given that Zhipan's text originated under circumstances remarkably similar to his own. Zhipan produced the *Shuilu yigui* as a revision of an existing text and tradition that had been introduced to the Mingzhou region a century earlier by the Song literatus and grand councilor Shi Hao. A native of Yin county in Mingzhou, Shi Hao rose to national prominence as tutor and advisor to Emperor Xiaozong (r. 1162–1189) and upon retirement in 1183 was rewarded with a huge estate and an imperially sanctioned family shrine. Shi's sponsorship of the *shuilu* appears to have been closely related to the latter events, for we know that he established a *shuilu* chapel on Mount Yuebo in Mingzhou and imported the rite from Jinshan "so that gratitude might be expressed in perpetuity to sovereigns and kin on high."[86] Moreover, it appears that he modified the Jinshan text specifically to this end.

Long troubled by the elitist thrust of Shi Hao's version of the rite, the liturgical community at Mount Yuebo prevailed on Zhipan to revise the existing text. Zhipan explains:

> The community at Zunjiao [Monastery] used to say that the dedicatory litanies [compiled by] the King of Yue [Shi Hao] were concerned primarily with expressing gratitude to former officials and the honoring of sovereign and parents. They were the pinnacle of elegance and beauty, but they did not convey the basic idea of the equality of noble and lowly, rich and poor, in the practice of ritual offering.[87]

As a broadly educated cleric specially versed in Tiantai liturgical norms, Zhipan probably did his utmost to preserve the literary splendor of Shi Hao's litanies while redirecting their focus to more acceptable Buddhist ends. That Zhuhong would be drawn to Zhipan's redaction seems particularly fitting given Zhuhong's own elite monastic leanings, Neo-Confucian education, and anguished background as declining local gentry.[88]

Within several generations of Zhuhong's death, the Jinshan *shuilu* tradition that he so vehemently accused of commodification was replaced in the public eye by his own version of the rite—a change brought about by the Qing court's controls on ordination and widespread sponsorship of Zhuhong's teachings. As ironic as it may seem, in the Republican period, cries for ritual reform were once again roused, but this time Zhuhong's *shuilu* was the target of criticism, condemned by modernist monks for fostering superstition and debasing the true spiritual aims of the Buddhist clergy.[89]

The *Shuilu* Altar Space and Pantheon

As shown above, the *shuilu* manuals exhibit a continual reworking of the rite's content and thrust in response to the interests of different liturgical communities. As an accepted medium for the transmission of *shuilu* ritual culture, this literature served as a key means for the maintenance of tradition as well as a vehicle with which to challenge and redefine it.[90] The same may be said for the iconographic scrolls and the representations of the *shuilu* altar space *(daochang)* that they encode, to which we will now turn.

The seven-day *shuilu* cycle performed today, the core of which commences on the third day and lasts five days, is complicated by its two separate ceremonial foci, the inner and outer altars, at which entirely distinct ritual programs proceed in tandem. The inner altar is the setting for the five-day core offering to the beings of water and land, from which the rite takes its name. The seven-day format and the basic sequence for the inner altar are already evident in the writings of Yang E. Documents from the Yuan and Ming imperial convocations, as well as sketches in novels such as the *Jinping mei,* further suggest that an arrangement reminiscent of the inner and outer altars existed at least by the fourteenth century.[91]

THE OUTER ALTAR

The outer altar *(waitan)* is a complex affair, comprising some half a dozen subsidiary ritual sites dedicated to different cultic cycles. As described by Yirun, these include altars for the *Liang huang chan,* performed the first three days of the rite, and for recitation of the Lotus Sutra on the fourth day, the Sūraṅgama Sutra (Shoulengyan jing) on the fifth day, the Sutra

 of the Buddha Master of Healing (Yaoshi rulai benyuan jing) on the sixth day, and the Diamond Sutra on the seventh day. Special altars are also set up for the continual recitation of the Avatamsaka or Huayan Sutra (Huayan jing) throughout the seven days, as well as for recitation of "various other sutras" *(zhujing tan)* renowned for their efficacy. Similarly, a separate Pure Land altar *(jingtu tan)* is established for performance of *nianfo qi* or "seven days of buddha mindfulness," where eight clerics recite the name of Buddha Amitabha throughout the rite.[92]

Descriptions of modern-day *shuilu* performances offered by Kamata Shigeo and Prip-Møller further complicate the picture by adding another layer of ritual activity to the outer altar. It appears that, at least since the Qing period, large-scale ceremonies for lay bodhisattva and five-precept ordinations—upon occasion, even monastic ordinations—have been held concurrently with the *shuilu* performance.[93] Vegetarian feasts are also traditionally an important part of the week's activities, as a symbolic motif in the offerings of the inner altar and as actual noon banquets provided daily for participants and hangers-on. Taken together, the activities at the outer altar—the rites for confession of sins, sharing food, and receipt of the Buddhist precepts—stand as an analogue to the idealized drama of conversion and universal salvation enacted symbolically in the inner altar.

THE INNER ALTAR AND ITS PANTHEON

The manuals of Zhipan/Zuhong and Yirun describe the inner altar as a north-south aligned, rectangular structure, spatially differentiated into an "upper hall" and a "lower hall." This twofold arrangement is also consistent with the early-Song texts of Yang E and Su Shi.[94] Yang E and Su Shi, our earliest sources for the *shuilu* pantheon, enumerate a total of sixteen offering seats *(xi)* or stations *(wei),* eight for the upper hall and eight for the lower, each duly numbered and ranked. The stations of the upper hall are identified with "saints or sages": (1) the buddhas (Vairocana, Shakyamuni, etc.), (2) the Buddhist Dharma (the scriptures), (3) the Buddhist sangha (idealized), (4) the great Mahayana bodhisattvas (Manjushri, Samantabhadra, etc.), (5) the pratyekabuddhas, (6) the Hinayana arhats, (7) divine immortals endowed with the five supernatural powers, who promote freedom from desire and assist the propagation of Buddhism, and (8) the mundane *(shijian)* gods (C. *tian;* S. *deva*) and dragons (*C. long;* S. *nāga*) of Indian Buddhist lore who protect the Buddhist Dharma.

The eight stations of the lower hall comprise the unenlightened beings of the Buddhist six realms of samsara organized as follows: (9) rulers, ministers, and official functionaries of the human imperial bureaucracy; (10) gods of the desire, form, and formless heavens (the celestial bureaucracy); (11) *asuras* or demigods *(axiuluo* or *guishen);* (12) general human populace; (13) hungry ghosts; (14) animals; (15) beings of hell (C. *diyu;* S. *nāraka*); and (16) liminoids who inhabit the purgatorial ministries *(difu)* of the netherworld between death and rebirth, otherwise referred to as "beings of the netherworld outside of the six realms."[95]

Together the upper and lower stations provide a comprehensive taxonomy of the species and levels of being of the universe, its inhabitants arranged in a vast "chain of being" according to the familiar Buddhist schematic of the tenfold Dharma-realm (S. *dharmadhātu*). At the apex of the cosmic hierarchy lie the four supramundane or saintly planes of the buddhas, bodhisattvas, pratyekabuddhas, and arhats, namely, those beings who have transcended the sorrows of the illusory world of birth and death. At the bottom lie the six mundane or afflicted realms of samsaric rebirth, from the exalted but spiritually fettered godly, *asura,* and human realms,

Table 1 The *Shuilu* Inner Altar Stations

Upper Hall	
1. Buddhas	*6. Chinese Buddhist patriarchs
2. Dharma (Buddhist scripture, etc.)	7. Immortals (*rsi;* Buddhist protectors)
3. Bodhisattvas	8. Dharma-protecting gods (Brahma, Indra, etc.)
4. Pratyekabuddhas	*9. Divine protectors (of monasteries, relics, etc.)
5. Srāvakas (arhats)	*10. Great masters or luminaries of the *shuilu*
Lower Hall	
11. Gods of the celestial bureaucracy	18. Denizens of the hells
*12. Gods of the terrestrial bureaucracy	19. Animals
13. Sovereigns, officials, etc., of the human bureaucracy	20. Liminoids in the process of rebirth *(wangling)*
14. Humans (hierarchically by occupation)	*21. Local gods of city, shrine, village
15. Demigods and demonic beings *(asuras, guishen)*	*22. Guardian gods of the monastery
16. Hungry ghosts *(preta, egui)*	*23. Departed spirits of abbots, teachers, brethren, and monastery donors
*17. Yama and the Ten Purgatorial Courts of the Netherworld.	*24. Departed spirits of ancestors, relatives, teachers, and friends (of the *shuilu* sponsors)

*Additions to the original sixteen stations

to the turbid destinies of the animals, hungry ghosts, and hells. Thus the distinction between upper and lower halls carries strong soteriological overtones, demarcating the sagely ones, the realized purveyors and protectors of the Buddhist Dharma, from the ignorant beings who have yet to accept the Dharma's law and enjoy its fruits.

The *Shuilu yigui* of Zhipan and Zhuhong expands the list of inner altar stations to a total of twenty-four (table 1). In the upper hall, the station for the generic sangha (old no. 3) has been eliminated, ostensibly because the sangha is represented by the remaining five stations of the upper hall. Three new stations have been added: the patriarchs of the different Chinese Buddhist schools (new no. 6); the divine protectors *(da shenwang)* of local Buddhist relics, stupas, monasteries, and precept-holders (new no. 9); and the great masters *(dashi)* responsible for creating and promulgating the *shuilu* rite (new no. 10).[96]

To the lower hall, six new altar seats or stations have been added. The generic station of the gods or *devas* (old no. 10) has been divided (and renumbered) to produce the station of the august gods of the celestial bureaucracy of the form, formless, and desire heavens (new no. 11) and the station of the gods of the terrestrial pantheon of the five marchmounts, the four confluences, and their subsidiary domains (new no. 12). Virtually all of these deities come from the Daoist or state-sponsored Chinese pantheon rather than from Indian Buddhist sources, deities from the latter, such as Brahma and Indra, having been incorporated into station no. 8 of the upper hall as enlightened thearchs pledged to guard the Buddhist Dharma.

Two additional stations have, in turn, been spun off from the newly established station

 of the Chinese terrestrial gods (new no. 12), including one for the local gods of the city walls *(chenghuang),* shrine *(ci),* village, and so on (new no. 21) and one for the protecting spirits of local Buddhist monastery and temple grounds (*qielan shen* and *tudi shen;* new no. 22). The generic station for the human species (former no. 12) has been renumbered and divided to produce two additional human stations: departed spirits of the sectarian patriarchs, abbots, monastic teachers, and friends of the local monastery (new no. 23) and departed spirits of ancestors, relatives, teachers, and friends of the local sponsors of the *shuilu* rite (new no. 24). Finally, Yama and the Ten Kings of the Chinese netherworld purgatorial court have been added as station number 17.[97]

Even with the limited examples of Yang E and Zhuhong cited here, we can see that the original eighteen stations of the *shuilu* underwent continued expansion and redistribution at the hands of different redactors. Zhuhong's own legacy shows this malleability. As a rule Zhuhong subdivides individual altar stations into lists of specific deities or subspecies, usually comprising ten per station. The contents of these rosters were especially susceptible to transformation at the local level. Yirun, for example, emends Zhuhong's text by incorporating the bodhisattva Dizang and his root sutras into the *shuilu* proceedings, a decision he justifies on the basis of the deity's popularity and the fact that "the Bodhisattva Dizang [is renowned for having] the most solemn and profound vow for universal deliverance of beings in the purgatorial netherworld *(mingyang).*" He also expands the rosters of indigenous Chinese deities by adding the minions of the purgatorial court of the Lord of Mount Tai, which he argues "in recent times is spread everywhere at [popular] temples *(miao)* and rites for the dead."[98]

Whereas the alterations within Zhuhong's tradition appear to be more self-contained, materials like Jiexiu's *Tiandi mingyang shuilu dazhai yiwen* and the fifteenth-century *shuilu* scrolls from Baoning Monastery show expansions of a far more radical sort. Here we find a pantheon oriented strongly toward the deities of the Daoist posterior heaven, the gods of the high Daoist and state cults who mediate the cosmic order within the human sphere rather than those transcendent beings who mark its origins in the uncreate. Jiexiu's *Tiandi mingyang shuilu dazhai yiwen* appears to contain ritual sequences for invoking such divine bureaucracies as the three ministries of heaven, earth, and the waters, the gods of wind and rain, the ten kings of hell, and the gods of the eight trigrams. The Baoning Monastery scrolls and Chiwon's *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chae'ŭi pom'ŭm ch'aek chip* are even more densely packed with minions of the celestial and terrestrial bureaucracies, their middle ranks swelled by the likes of the Jade Emperor; the gods of wind, rain, thunder, lightning, sprouts, and growth; the God of the Five Roads; gods of sun and moon; the Realized Lord of the Northern Dipper; and a plethora of lesser deities of the celestial realms, terrestrial realms, and underworld, variously headed by the three bodhisattvas Heavenly Store Bodhisattva (Tianzang pusa), Bodhisattva Sustainer of the Earth (Chidi pusa), and Bodhisattva Earth Store (Dizang pusa); ancient sage kings and cultural heroes; exemplary officials; and paragons of chastity and filial piety.[99] It is a pantheon perfectly suited to a tradition of ritual performance heavily patronized by the imperial court.

And yet, even with these dramatic fluctuations in the makeup of the altar stations, the organizing principles and spatial protocols of the pantheon are remarkably stable. Structured according to the Buddhist tenfold Dharma-realm, the hierarchy remains evident in all aspects of the inner altar, from the extrinsic placement of the individual altar seats to the numbered rankings inscribed on the *shuilu* scrolls. The most elemental division is between the beings of the upper and lower halls. The upper hall, situated opposite the door, toward the back or

northern end of the room, is reserved for the ten classes of "sagely or worthy" beings, enlightened beings who have achieved an irreversible identification with the transcendent Buddhist Three Jewels. The protocol informing their placement is their relative level of spiritual development or function as determined by the principles of Chinese Buddhist doctrinal classification and soteriology *(panjiao)*. The stations for the buddhas, bodhisattvas, arhats, and pratyekabuddhas—the transcendent realm par excellence—are situated squarely along the north wall, overlooking the progressively inferior stations to the east, west, and south. The lower stations, toward the southern end of the hall, compose the domain of the unenlightened beings of the six realms of samsara—the domain of the created. Here the hierarchy continues to unfold, from celestial and terrestrial gods through human sovereigns and subjects to the hungry ghosts, hell dwellers, and solitary souls, all positioned in ranked relation to one another and to the transcendent apex of the Three Jewels on the north wall.

Together the upper and lower halls present a cipher of the Buddhist universe at large. The unstated "law" informing this chain of being is the Dharma of moral or spiritual cause and effect—the elemental Buddhist notion that native endowment and accomplishment of any kind, mundane or supramundane, is retributive by nature—a reward in kind for deeds done (S. *karma*). With this continuity of valence between causal action and retributive effect or state, differences in species, fortune, and rank all become the function of a singular moral logic, the laws of which are grounded in the social and ascetic imperatives of the Buddhist precepts and path. The visual panorama of the *shuilu* altar, with its cartouche-bearing scrolls and murals, is in many respects analogous to the morality tracts and ledgers popular in later imperial China: it charts a universal law of moral retribution and status and compels one to plot one's place in it.

By the same token, one need only review the list of heinous crimes associated with the hungry ghosts, hell-bound beings, and solitary souls depicted at the bottom of the scale to appreciate how deeply these value structures accord with those of Chinese society at large, not just Buddhist systems. Gyss-Vermande, among others, has found the *shuilu* altar arrangement so uniquely "Chinese" that she is ready to assign a Daoist origin to it. I believe this is excessive (tantamount to drawing an a priori boundary between things "Buddhist" and "Chinese" in China), but there is no question that the *shuilu* reproduces symbolic protocols that resonate profoundly with other Chinese ritual venues, such as the Daoist *jiao* or the grand rites of the Tang imperium described in the Kaiyuan code.[100] To this extent, at the same time that the *shuilu* is uncompromising in its Buddhist hegemony (the Three Jewels, after all, occupy the place of authority), the *shuilu* pantheon and altar space stretch beyond specifically "Buddhist" horizons and seamlessly intersect with a much broader idiom of symbolic valuation. Whatever Buddhist messages the *shuilu* may afford are negotiated within these extended generative structures.

One might say that specific religious priorities are generated and raised to the level of discrete ideologies through manipulation of this master scheme of spatial valuation. Difference is articulated by invoking a common and universal signifying idiom, but this very act brings the entire idiom into the foreground: it is deliberately made visible in the cosmograph of the *shuilu* altar stations and iconography. This sort of totalization is the stuff of religious ideology. When we think back to the shifts in the *shuilu* stations that occurred between one ritual redaction and another, it is easy to imagine how they might signal important changes in the religious priorities of the communities that performed the rite. The comparison may be tenuous, but when we set the altar arrangement of Zhipan and Zhuhong against the eighteen

stations described by Yang E several centuries earlier, we notice an intensified delineation of status in three main areas: the institutional representation of the monastic sangha, organized in terms of sectarian (patriarchal) lineage and specific monastery affiliation; family genealogy and hierarchy, with increasingly elaborate distinctions in clan status and the rules of protocol that govern the listing of names at the donor's altar station; and the bureaucratization of local gods along the lines of the high-Daoist and state pantheons. With this comes a corresponding transformation of spiritual cosmography, whereby the mythical landscapes of Daoist and other indigenous Chinese traditions—the Chinese spiritual bureaucracy—merge seamlessly with elements of the Indian Buddhist cosmos. Elaboration of the purgatorial court and the liminoids of the intermediate state is a particularly noticeable aspect of this change.

All of these developments conform closely to new focal points of religious concern that emerged with the social and cultural changes of the Song. Patricia Ebrey, in her work on family ritual and kinship organization, points to the Song as a formative period in the development of the basic Neo-Confucian liturgical codifications and state tax and inheritance laws that informed descent-group organization and genealogical practice in the late imperial period.[101] The nomenclature and principles of organization used by Zhipan and Zhuhong for the altar station dedicated to clan ancestors directly respond to these norms.[102]

In the new altar stations for the celestial and terrestrial gods (nos. 11 and 12) devised by Zhipan/Zhuhong and the extensive retinue of local gods comprising the "middle altar/hall" stations of the Korean *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chae'ŭi* tracts, we are confronted with a configuration quite different from the classic Indian Buddhist representation of the heavens found in Yang E's attenuated *Shuilu yiwen.* Of particular interest is the inclusion of numerous figures from major Lingbao Daoist rites such as the fast of the yellow register *(huanglu zhai).*[103]

These, of course, are developments particular to the *Shuilu yigui* and its offspring. Alternative traditions, such as Jiexiu's *Tiandi mingyang shuilu dazhai yiwen,* are likely to present a very different picture and set of priorities. As an example of just how blatantly ideological and polemical these shifts could be, we need only consider the measures once taken by the Song emperor Huizong with respect to *shuilu* icon and altar arrangements. An ardent patron of Daoism, Huizong was disgruntled by the Buddhist convention of "classifying the Celestial Emperor Shangdi among [lowly] demons and spirits, and removing the gods of the great confluences *(dushen)* to the margins." Since this problem was particularly conspicuous in the altar arrangement of the *shuilu,* in 1106 he ordered it reconfigured, with stations to the Daoist Three Pure Ones added to the pantheon.[104]

Cosmograph and Ritual Simulacrum: The *Shuilu* Paintings in the Choreographic and Visual Protocols of the Inner Altar

In the preceding sections I have suggested that the *shuilu* rite, its pantheon, and its iconography were routinely stretched and deflected by the different liturgical communities that appropriated them. Such historical sensitivity underscores the idea that, as a religious event or assemblage, the *shuilu* was a focal point for the articulation of values and motivations that went beyond the narrow confines of Buddhist soteriology as we conventionally envision them. On the one hand, the altar was a locus of religious presence and power, a simulacrum of the known universe through which the forces of existence could be realigned to bring

deliverance or renewal to its inhabitants. In this sense, the relationship between the altar and its sponsors could properly be considered iconic and effective, insofar as it objectifies and mediates sacred presence on behalf of the celebrants. On the other hand, the inner altar, as cosmograph, encoded structures of value that were formative of Chinese cultural perceptions in the more elemental sense, allowing for an entire range of different personal and collective representations to be played out in the course of the *shuilu* performance. In this capacity the altar seems to have doubled as a didactic device, at times used for ends that were ancillary to the professed aims of the rite itself.

The question that confronts us here is how the ritual protocols themselves might have mediated these diverse functions. Related to this problem is the additional question of the extent to which pictorial style anticipates ritual function and meaning, or more specifically, whether the categories that we conventionally bring to the analysis of style and function in Buddhist art are adequate to describing art within its actual contexts. For example, the iconography of the *shuilu* inner altar readily lends itself to discussion both in terms of religious icon and didactic narrative—two of the most frequently encountered categories in stylistic studies of Buddhist art. "Icon" is associated with such attributes as "enlarged figures" in "full frontal view" and "axial symmetry," the intention being to "focus the attention" in ways specifically conducive to "ritual worship and veneration," "meditative visualization," or "mystical adventure." "Narrative scene" or "composite decor," by contrast, entails properties of "segmentation," "circuitousness," and "temporal" sequence, their modus operandus being an "explanatory telling" or "reading" that involves the sequential decoding of a "didactic message."[105] Judging from its stylistic properties, it seems that the *shuilu* altar could serve as the ground for a diversity of semiotic operations, all within one and the same ritual event. What do the *shuilu* manuals and their ritual protocols tell us about such operations, and how might these insights help to refine our thinking about style and functionality?

PROTOCOLS OF THE *SHUILU* ALTAR SPACE

According to Yirun's *Huiben,* the provisioning of the inner altar takes place on the morning of the second day of the rite, the first day being taken up with preparatory purifications and penances at the outer altar. Prior to this event, the space is simply not an altar space. The *shuilu* scrolls are hung around the walls of the chamber, their positions correlated to the status of the beings that they depict. Encomia for each of the twenty-four stations or categories of being, sixteen of which were composed by Su Shi, are suspended either above or alongside their respective scrolls. Yirun recommends that additional captions be used to identify individual scenes in the paintings, a feature that we find in both the Pilu Monastery murals and various sets of *shuilu* scrolls.[106] Thus, the space is to some measure textualized, with the textualizations organized by spatial hierarchy into narrative sequences.

After the scrolls have been arranged, twenty-four altar seats *(zuo)* are placed on long tables in front of their respective scrolls. If space is constricted, a second row of tables is set up behind the first, with sufficient room to pass between them. Paper placards *(paiwei)* bearing the name and number of the station are then installed on each seat, with incense burners and other equipment for ritual offering laid out accordingly. Thus, each station is concretized as a discrete altar site (alternatively referred to as the beings' banquet "seat" [*xi*]) focused on the placard. The scrolls or murals are largely marginal to this arrangement, often at some distance from the altar seats to which they correspond.

The scrolls and altar seats are distributed with even numbers on the east (right), odd numbers on the west (left). As noted above, the ten stations of the upper hall are grouped to the rear of the hall, the first five occupying the south-facing seat of honor along the north wall. The remaining stations of the upper hall extend along the walls and center tables to either side. The fourteen stations of the lower hall are situated toward the front of the hall, the last three seats (for the donor's ancestors and the tutelary spirits of household and temple) flanking the entrance.

Two tables are placed end to end along the central north-south axis of the hall, in front of the central altar to the buddhas. Installed on the table closest to the buddhas is the written testimonial known as the document of verification *(zhengming shu)* inscribed with the names of the primary sponsors of the rite. The second table holds the ritual implements and foodstuffs used for universal offering *(pugong)* to the upper and lower halls.[107] A facsimile bathing pavilion *(yuting)* is set up in the courtyard outside the inner altar, its interior ritually purified and outfitted for the symbolic purificatory bath of the *shuilu* assembly. A long bolt of cloth, the bridge of the immortals *(xianqiao)* or the pure path *(jingdao),* is suspended between the bathing pavilion and a table (precept altar) in front of the door to the inner altar.

THE RITUAL PERSONNEL

As the distinction between inner and outer altars suggests, there is a marked difference in status between the participants in the *shuilu* rite devolving around access to the proceedings of the inner altar. According to Ming and Qing sources, the rite of the inner altar is conducted by four principal figures: the chief liturgist or celebrant *(zhufa* or *fashi),* two assisting announcers or cantors *(biaobai),* and the chief sponsor *(zhaizhu* or *shizhu).* The first three are Buddhist clerics, monks, or nuns trained in the necessary ritual lore. They are served by incense and lamp attendants *(xiangdeng),* also monks or nuns, who handle the elaborate offerings and the constant stream of candles and incense used during the rite.[108]

The chief liturgist orchestrates the complex choreography and recitations. He is responsible for the elaborate internal visualizations and meditations that accompany bodily gesture and oral recitation. Although the privilege of assuming this role does not seem to have entailed any formal criteria of selection, the liturgist functions as the hierat par excellence and is responsible, through his contemplations and incantations, for forging the empowering link with the Three Jewels that enables efficacious response *(yingxian).* The two cantors assist the chief liturgist, attending to the majority of the recitations as he performs the main choreography and visualization. The chief sponsor represents the party that commissions a given performance. Being largely unfamiliar with the ritual routines, he or she is guided at every step by the chief liturgist and cantor. S*huilu* manuals typically print the litanies for recitation, sequence headings, and rudimentary pointers for ritual action in large-character font. Mental visualizations or contemplations and additional details of ritual procedure are subscripted *(zhu)* next to their respective litanies in small-character font. Referred to respectively as "phenomenal ritual procedure or performance" *(shiyi, xingshi)* and "visualization or mental actualization" *(guan, guanxiang, yun xin xiang),* this binary arrangement cognitively organizes the ritual process into manifest bodily and verbal action *(shen, kou)* and interiorized mental intent *(yi).* Both reflect conventions of Buddhist liturgical literature and theory dating back at least to the late Northern and Southern dynasties period.

In the *Shuilu yigui,* the visualizations are largely the responsibility of the chief liturgist,

although there are numerous instances in which the litanies instruct onlookers to join in. The verb *"xiang"* or, occasionally, the binome *"guanxiang,"* is used throughout the manual to denote these mental activities, as in "the chief liturgist should imagine or visualize that . . . " The procedures described in these passages are episodic and discursive, closer in form to animation narratives than to the "enraptured" fixations on divine presence that we typically associate with "meditative visualization" *(guan).* Often they are composed in verse, which is memorized and silently rehearsed as an aide de memoire to the visualization proper. Their function is performative rather than revelatory: they are mental counterparts to the invocatory utterances and gestures.

The manuals do not give a clear picture of who might be allowed to approach the inner altar or under what circumstances. Zhuhong's instructions speak frequently of a "grand assembly" *(dazhong)* that responsively joins the cantors in the chanting of certain litanies and hymns.[109] Such references suggest that others took part in the proceedings, albeit passively and from a distance. How many they were, whether they were monks, householders, or both, or whether the term simply refers to the collective group of assistants (incense and lamp acolytes), we cannot say, although the term *"dazhong"* has a long history in Chinese Buddhism of being used to refer to the monastic sangha. There is also evidence that the situation could vary greatly from place to place, despite the recommendations of the text. For example, we know that huge retinues of monks and nuns were employed in the grand state-sponsored *shuilu* services held at Jinshan and in Nanjing during the Yuan and Ming. Prip-Møller and Holmes Welch describe similarly elaborate ceremonies held at some of the larger monasteries in the modern era.[110] Nonetheless, one point stands out clearly in all the *shuilu* ritual writings: strict segregation is to be maintained between individuals permitted to enter the inner altar and those who must remain outside, the chief criterion being their degree of ritual purity.

According to Zhuhong and Yirun, access to the "solemn ground of the inner altar" is restricted to the ritual staff duly purified by ritual repentance, bathing, and change of clothing over the two days before the ceremonies for the inner altar commence.[111] On the first or second day, the incense and lamp acolytes hang the scrolls and lay out the altars. "[Other] persons are not permitted to intermingle or rashly enter [into the altar space], walk around or handle [the ritual objects]," Yirun cautions, "for fear that it will bring calamitous repercussions."[112] Zhuhong advises that, once the inner altar has been ritually purified and secured *(jiejie)* on the morning of the third day, "an honest and trustworthy individual be appointed to guard the sanctuary and prevent unwarranted persons from violating its ritual prohibitions." As is usually the case with major Buddhist rites, participants are enjoined to purification and change of clothing whenever they enter and exit the sanctuary.[113]

Ouyi Zhixu, who witnessed performances of Zhuhong's *shuilu* at Yunqi Monastery and compared them with the "Jinshan" tradition, confirms that Zhuhong and his successors enforced these restrictions on access to the inner sanctuary.[114] Kamata notes that this strictness is still very much the rule in modern-day traditions that look to the manuals of Zhuhong and Yirun. And yet, invectives against violators of ritual purity are frequent in the *shuilu* literature, suggesting that there were circles wherein attitudes toward entry into the ritual sanctuary were more lax.[115] Whatever the case may have been, the ritual proceedings of the inner altar centered narrowly on the officiants and primary sponsors. Thus it follows that the iconography of the altar was not intended to have any direct inspirational influence on the public at large, at least when the altar site was in a state of formal consecration.

THE ICONOGRAPHIC SCROLLS ENGAGED

Having situated the *shuilu* paintings in ritual space and delineated some of the restrictions governing access to that space, what can we say about the relationship between the iconographic paintings and ritual action proper? How does ritual gesture mediate gaze and visual presence for those involved in the proceedings?

Zhuhong and Yirun are abundantly clear on one important point: it is the placard station that hosts the given deity or spirit and serves as the iconic locus of ritual action, not the scroll or mural on the wall behind it. This functional distinction is underscored in various ways. While the placards are the focus of a ramified series of gestures and restraints designed specifically to invest them with iconic or sacred valence, no comparable set of operations is applied to the scrolls. Moreover, in the setting up of the inner altar, only the most casual effort is made to align individual scrolls with their respective altar stations and placards, the doubling up of altar tables further precluding any visible correspondence between scroll and station. During the course of the *shuilu* offerings themselves, virtually all ritual action is directed to the inscribed placard and its altar equipment (e.g., altar seat, incense burner), with the placard serving as the locus of iconic transaction. For example, the participating deities of the *shuilu* assembly are ritually installed by summoning them to their respective placards at the bathing pavilion, then escorting the placards across the "pure way" and placing them in their seats at the inner altar. Offerings are made to the placards; the creatures of the lower hall receive the precepts and profess their vows through the medium of the placard; and at the rite's conclusion, the assembly is dismissed by escorting the placards from the inner altar and burning them in the courtyard.[116]

For all their axial symmetry and evidence of figures in full frontal view, the *shuilu* paintings cannot be said to have served as "objects for worship or ritual veneration." But what of "meditative visualization" and "mystic adventure," two related operations or functions that so frequently come into play in discussions of Buddhist art as "icon"? The visualizations that accompany ritual gesture and recitation in the *shuilu* make no reference whatsoever to scroll or mural as an object of visual attention. Nor do the visualizations at any point instruct the participants to direct their gaze to the scrolls for rapturous absorption in sacred presence, eidetic visualization, or even simple review. In fact, both the horizons of the ritual gaze and the content of the meditations depart noticeably from the composition of the scrolls, even though the figures depicted in the scrolls are largely identical with those listed at the altar stations.

When the scrolls are mentioned in the manuals, the frame of reference is usually that of majestic adornment or decor *(zhuangyan* or *yanshi).* From at least the Sui period, the expressions "majestic adornment of the ritual space" *(yanshi daochang)* and "adornment and purification of the ritual space" *(yanjing daochang)* have seen use as a standard procedural rubric in Buddhist ritual manuals. The routine in question covers several different operations, including purification of the site *(jing daochang)* and installation of the ritual icons *(anzhi foxiang).* The latter two activities are distinguished from the more generic decoration of the chamber by their ritual specificity. Within this refined lexicon, *zhuangyan* and *yanshi* connote aspects of decor that are ancillary to the central altar and icon[s] proper, such as canopies, banners, and peripheral images that "enhance the appearance or affect of a pure land."[117] The *shuilu* scrolls are typically treated in this vein of "decor," distinct from the more ritually intensified procedures for purifying the site and installing the icons.

Such treatment, of course, does not mean that the composition and form of the paintings were not subjected to close inspection. Zhuhong took issue with *shuilu* sets from Nanjing on the grounds that their iconography was "inaccurate and unsuitable," even though the paintings played no direct role as ritual object or icon. Then again, Yirun, on the very same grounds, criticized Zhuhong for being excessively fastidious: "I have looked over these paintings [criticized by Zhuhong] and they are not necessarily wrong. After all, using [painted scrolls] in the ritual sanctuary is primarily a concern of trying to inspire sincere reverence. [Fine points of] iconography are not what is really important. They are meant to provide minor assistance to contemplation *(guan),* and that is all."[118]

In light of such evidence, how are we to represent the *shuilu* scrolls and murals within the ritual context? Seen through the idealized instructions of the *shuilu* manuals (and, certainly, there are other modes of viewing these objects), one can only conclude that the paintings are not icons, if by "icon" we mean, strictly speaking, an "*object* of ritual action and worship." Certain pictorial compositions may use familiar iconic cues, such as full frontal position and axial symmetry. Under certain circumstances, these cues may even invoke ritualized responses customarily employed in the presence of actual icons (focused gaze, joined palms, standing to one side). But in the *shuilu* ritual, the iconographic paintings are not employed to specific iconic affect. That function is reserved for the calligraphic placards instead.

Since the paintings have no formal role in the *shuilu* protocols, we might conclude that their function was purely decorative. However, here we risk a characterization that may be as reductive and problematic as that of "religious icon." As an integral part of the inner altar, the scrolls reiterate symbolic structures that are generative to the choreography of the rite. Although not the focus of ritual action, they constitute the simulacrum in which that action and its intentions unfold, thereby organizing the attention in distinctive ways. Moreover, when viewed within the extended field of ritualized space, symbol, and gesture, some striking interactions emerge. What, for example, do the functional differentiations between calligraphic inscription and pictorial representation imply about the particular space that pictorial representation occupies in the visual program of the *shuilu?* The scrolls, which are not iconic in function, are preserved and reused in rite after rite, while the altar placards, which are iconic and directly significant to the ritual action, are deliberately destroyed. The pictorial repertoire is arranged as a continuous panorama but is subordinated to and organized by inscribed verse and cartouche. Considerations such as these point to the presence of certain complex, yet deliberate, choices regarding visual representation and action in the *shuilu,* choices that strike one as eminently historical and that are not going to disclose themselves through recourse to a priori assumptions about the relationship between style and ritual function in Buddhist art.

Up to this point our speculations have been confined to the immediate context of the formal ritual procedure. Is this the only mode through which the paintings were accessed at *shuilu* convocations, or were other modes available within and beyond this ramified and restrictive setting? It would seem so. Zhuhong's strictures on access to the inner altar may have kept the general public from the altar site's visual program during the immediate proceedings of the inner altar, but this is not to say that they did not have access before and after the sanctuary was ritually secured. Indeed, there is every indication that the *shuilu* paintings were available for public viewing at these times. Zhuhong and Yirun specify that the scrolls and altar equipment be set out on the morning of the second day (at the latest), but the site is not consecrated or restrictions in effect until the morning of the third day.[119] Other sources suggest that

 there was considerable variation in this regard. For example, we know that in 1623 the abbot Hongzhao added a second story to the Jinshan *shuilu* hall so that its set of imperially commissioned scrolls might be placed on permanent display.[120] Prip-Møller likewise reports that the scrolls often hung for weeks after *shuilu* ceremonies were performed at Mount Baohua.[121] Access was likely even more routine in the case of *shuilu* halls with murals, since murals were continually on view and the halls reconsecrated as ritual spaces before each performance.

If this was the case, casual review of the inner altar may have been an intended and significant part of the ritual event, even though it stood outside the formal boundaries of the ritual procedure proper. Moving from scroll to scroll, perusing their images and captions without the formal constraints of ritual process, viewers would be free to absorb the full didactic import of the moral messages latent in the pictorial tableaux and captions of the inner altar. As a graph of cosmic hierarchy and process, the *shuilu* panels provide a sweeping index of moral cause and effect strikingly analogous to the morality ledgers so popular in the post-Song period. Moreover, there seems a powerful continuity between Zhuhong's concern for the "orthodox" content and placement of the *shuilu* iconography, on the one hand, and the fact that he was author of one of the most influential ledgers of merit and a vociferous advocate of the quantification of good and evil deeds, on the other. It may well be that this didactic element was present in the *shuilu* ritual economy all along. Witness the Ming imperium's charge to the *jiao* "evangelists," who were enjoined to use Buddhist ritual stagings, such as the rite for release of the flaming mouths, as an occasion for moral indoctrination of the populace.

Edifying verses by the Song poet, statesman, and *shuilu* patron Su Shi are still displayed in *shuilu* altars today, much as they were a millennium ago. Thus it seems appropriate to close with his example. By his own testimony, Su was moved to give up the slaughter of animals for food when, as a boy, he encountered graphic scenes of karmic sin and retribution depicted in a set of *shuilu* scrolls.[122] Such information demonstrates the polyvalence that objects can assume in ritual settings. At the same time, it underscores the fact that there are functional limits to contextualization: the life of "ritual" objects need not cease with their release from a given ritual context. They simply assume a different role. We must wonder if Su Shi's experience was not commonplace at *shuilu* convocations, perhaps, for many, more central to the event than the arcane proceedings of the ritual itself.

Notes

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1. Zongze, *Shuilu yuanqi,* in Zongxiao, *Shishi tonglan, Wanzi xu zangjing* (hereafter, *XZJ*), Dai Nippon zokuzōkyō, 150 cases (Reprint, Taibei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1968–1970), 101.443a.
2. Adapted from Chün-fang Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 149; and Makita Tairyō, "Suiriku'e shōkō," *Chūgoku Bukkyōshi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Daitō shuppan, 1984), vol. 2. For additional background on the *shuilu,* see Michel Strickmann, *Mantras et mandarins: le bouddhisme tantrique den Chine* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), 369–411.
3. See *Jiu mianran egui tuoluoni shenzhou jing* (Śikṣānanda version) and *Jiuba yankou egui tuoluoni jing* (Amoghavajra version), in *Taishō shinshū dai zōkyō* (hereafter, *T*), ed. Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaikyoku (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–1935), vol. 21, nos. 1313 and 1314, respectively. The Flaming-Mouth cult is discussed in Charles Orzech, *Esoteric Buddhism and the* Shishi *in China,* SBS Monograph for Buddhist Studies 2 (University of Copenhagen, November 1993), 51–71. For the *yulanpen* cult, see Stephen Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).

4. Holmes Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism, 1900–1950* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), 151. On the use of the term *"pudu"* (universal deliverance) specifically for wholesale deliverance of ghosts and the nameless dead, see Matsumoto Kōichi, "Dōkyō to shūkyō girei," in Fukui Kōjun, *Dōkyō,* vol. 1: *Dōkyō wa nani ka* (Tokyo: Hirakawa shuppansha, 1983), 225–229; also Duane P'ang, "The P'u-tu Ritual: A Celebration of the Chinese Community of Honolulu," in *Buddhist and Taoist Studies,* Asian Studies at Hawaii, no. 18, ed. Michael Saso and David Chappell (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1977), 95–122; and Robert P. Weller, *Unities and Diversities in Chinese Religion* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987).
5. In addition to the hungry ghosts, the Flaming-Mouth Sutra provides for distributions to both Brahma-*ṛṣi* and the Three Jewels. The latter is the most ritually structured of the three. *Jiuba yankou egui tuoluoni jing, T* 21.965b18–24.
6. Zongxiao's preface to *Shishi tonglan, XZJ* 101.416b.
7. For the *shuilu* and the Chinese festival cycle, see Liu Chun-jo, "Five Major Chant Types of the Buddhist Service, *gong-tian,*" *Chinoperl Papers* 8 (1978): 137–138. Also, Johannes Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries* (Copenhagen, 1937; reprint, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1982), 156. The association with rainmaking is touched upon in Henrik H. Sørensen, "A Bibliographical Survey of Buddhist Ritual Texts from Korea," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* (1991–1992): 175. Rites for rain and local gods also turn up in collected writings of literati officials. See, for example, Shi Hao's *Fuzhou qiyu she shuilu shu,* in *Maofeng zhenyin manlu,* 52 fasc., *Siku quan shu zhenben, erji,* vol. 260 (Taibei: Shangwu shuju, 1971), 23.9a.
8. For Zhuhong and his works, see Chün-fang Yü, *Renewal of Buddhism in China.* In addition to circulating independently, the *Shuilu yigui* appears in Zhuhong's collected works, first published in 1624 as *Yunqi fahui.* An expanded facsimile edition of this collection, which includes additional works by Zhuhong, is available as *Yingyin lienchi dashi quanji,* ed. Dongchu, 4th printing (Taibei: Dungchu chubanshe, 1992; hereafter, *LCQJ*). The *Shuilu yigui* is also reproduced in XZJ 129.527–604. All citations to the *Shuilu yigui* are from the XZJ edition. For details on Zhipan, see Jan Yun-hua's "Chih-p'an" in *Sung Biographies,* ed. Herbert Franke (Wiesbaden: Franz Stenier Verlag GMBH, 1976), 227–234.
9. Chinese and Japanese collections have so far yielded no record of extant copies of Zhipan's text predating Zhuhong's recodification. Sørensen has found two printed copies (dated 1470 and 1573) of a *Zhipan wen* (Tract of Zhipan) in Korean archives, which he identifies as Zhipan's original *Shuilu yigui,* in six fascicles. However, further comparisons will be needed before this can be ascertained, since Zhipan is known to have produced at least one other ritual tract in addition to his *shuilu.* See Jan, "Chih-p'an," 233–234; also, Sørensen, "Bibliographical Survey," 175, n. 70.
10. In Yirun's own words, "Yunqi [Zhuhong] only published the instructions for the cantors *(biaobai)* and the litanies *(yiwen).* The rest was conveyed in person. For this reason it could never achieve general circulation. Here I have organized and provided details for all the procedures, in order to [realize the] universal salvation *(pudu)* [of all beings]." *Shuilu yigui huiben* (Taibei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1985), 5. Yirun was also author of the *Baizhang qinggui zhengyi ji* (dated 1823), a ten-volume gloss on an imperially sponsored code for public Chan monasteries, entitled *Chixiu baizhang qinggui* (*T* 48), composed during the Yuan-period. The latter was the official code for Chan institutions in the Ming and Qing dynasties, and Yirun's *Zhengyi ji* became the authoritative interpretation of this work for Buddhist monastics of the late-Qing and Republican periods. The *shuilu* rite figures prominently in the ritual cycle of the *Zhengyi ji,* and there is strong evidence that Yirun's *Shuilu yigui huiben* circulated with it. See *Baizhang qinggui zhengyi ji, XZJ* 111.581a; 663b.

    At least two editions of the *Huiben* are available in reprint today: a 1917 edition produced (by Jingxin) at Tiantong Monastery in Mingzhou, with facsimile reprint in 1985 by Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, Taipei; and a 1924 edition by the Pure Land master Yinguang, with facsimile reprints by Foguang shuju, Taipei (d.u.), and the Buddhist Association of China, Shanghai (d.u.). Although identical in content, the two editions arrange the subsidiary chapters differently. All citations in this essay are to the 1985 Xinwenfeng reprint.
11. The iconographic appendix to the *Huiben* was completed by Yirun's disciple Zhenyi Xiyuan in 1824 at Yirun's request. See *Chongding shuilu huashi yin* in *Huiben* 6:391–440.
12. See Zhiguan (Zheng Yingfang), *Fajie shengfan shuilu dazhai puli daochang xingxiang tonglun* (hereafter,

Tonglun), *XZJ* 129; and *Fajie shengfan shuilu dazhai falun baochan, XZJ* 129 and 130. For Zheng Yingfang, see Henri Doré, *Sommaire historique du bouddhisme* (1934–1936; reprint New York: Garland, 1981), 2:117.

13. The first three sections are placed at the beginning of the *Tonglun;* the section on iconographic protocols is attached to the end. *Tonglun, XZJ* 129.684a–689a.
14. Among the more curious innovations is his introduction of an alternative arrangement for the inner altar instead of the standard rectangular one. Circular in structure, with altar stations and mirrors placed equidistantly around its perimeter, the design represents a deliberate ideological transformation on Zheng's part, a throwback to the famous "golden-lion" display that the Huayan patriarch Fazang (643–712) used to demonstrate Huayan teachings to Empress Wu Zetian. Peter N. Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 156–157. Zheng's altar arrangement is described in the opening *zonglun* (general discourse) of his *Shuilu tonglun, XZJ* 129.605a and 634a. In addition to his Huayan-influenced round altar, Zheng describes a second, rectangular arrangement, which by all indications was the standard one.
15. Contrary to Strickmann's suggestion, Zheng (Zhiguan) was not a "spiritual descendant" of Zhuhong (Strickmann, *Mantras et mandarins,* 388). Moreover, because his *Tonglun* and *Falun* have remained largely marginal or even anomalous to contemporary *shuilu* performances, relying on them for reconstruction of mainstream *shuilu* traditions of the Ming and Qing in precarious. Yirun, on the other hand, claims to have access to Zhuhong's living tradition, as preserved among Hangzhou and related clergy.
16. *Song shi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 158.5187b.
17. Zongxiao, *Shishi tonglan, XZJ* 101. This is a miscellany of Song-period tracts on "food-bestowal" practices *(shishi)* organized according to specific rite. In addition to documents by Su Shi, Zongze, and other Northern Song patrons of the *shuilu, Shishi tonglan* contains four abstracts and a colophon from Yang E's *Shuilu yi:* (a) *Chu ru daochang xujian shuilu yi* (Procedure for first entering the altar space and setting up the *shuilu* rite), (b) *Xuanbai zhaoqing shangtang bawei shengzhu* (Invitation of the eight saintly groups of the upper hall), (c) *Xuanbai zhaoqing xiatang bawei shengfan* (Invitation of the eight saintly and common groups of the lower hall), (d) *Shuilu zhai yiwen houxu* (Colophon to the *Shuilu zhai yiwen*), and (e) *Hu qian zhaoqing qibai* (Explanation of the previous litany of invitation). See *Shishi tonglan, XZJ* 101:445b–451a. Yang E's *Shuilu yi* also appears in the bibliographical treatise of the *Song shi,* 158.5187b.
18. Zongze, *Shuilu yuanqi,* in *Shishi tonglan, XZJ* 101.442a and 443a.
19. *Shimen zhengtong* 4, *XZJ* 130.802a. For Yang E's *Shuilu dazhai lingji ji* (Record of the noumenal traces of the grand feast of water and land), see *Shishi tonglan, XZJ* 101.440a–441b.
20. Strickmann identifies Changlu Zongze as a monk of the Tiantai school, when in fact he was one of the more influential Chan masters of the Northern Song; see Strickmann, *Mantras and Mandarins,* 384. See Carl Bielefeldt, *Dōgen's Manuals of Zen Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
21. Ouyi Zhixu, *Yuezang zhijin,* dated 1654, in *Shōwa hōbō mokuroku,* 3:1030a–b and 1251b; the text also appears in Chan master Wenkong's *Yimen,* dated 1593–1619. See Cai Yunchen, *Ershiwu zhong zangjing mulu duizhao kaoshi* (Taibei: Xinwenfeng, 1983).
22. See Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, "Segaki shisō no Chūgoku teki juyō," in Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, *Dōkyō to Bukkyō* (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1970), 1:406–408 and 424. Regrettably I was unable to obtain this text in time for completion of this chapter.
23. Sørensen has identified these *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chae'ŭi* manuals in an inventory of Buddhist ritual texts from Chosŏn-dynasty Korea; see his "Bibliographical Survey," 159–200. The earliest is the *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chae'ŭi chammun* (Miscellaneous tracts for the [rite of] heaven and earth, the netherworld and world of the living, water and land), a two-fascicle work compiled by Chugam Yusa (d.u.) in 1342, with a printed edition dated to 1492. Three additional works appear to derive from it: the *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chae'ŭi choryo* (two fascicles, printed edition dated to 1562); the *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chae'ŭi mun* (one fascicle, attributed to another Chugam, with the printed edition dated to 1578); and *Ch'inji myŏngyang suryuk chae'ŭi so pangmun ch'ŏp choryo* (one fascicle, edition dated 1574). The last of these, the *So pangmun ch'ŏp choryo* (Essential procedures for the documents of declaration and announcement), is concerned with preparation of writs and calligraphic documents used in the rite and according to Sørensen (173) is often found appended to the two-fascicle *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chae'ŭi choryo.*

    Guidelines for *shuilu* rites, much abbreviated in form, also appear in series of ritual miscellanies that bear the title *Chagi mun* (Tracts of Chagi) and date largely from the seventeenth century. Sørenson

identifies Chagi as a Chinese monk (Zikui) of the Southern Song period (ca. 1150). However, I have been unable to find any mention of him in Song sources, including the *Shimen zhengtong* that Sørensen himself mentions as evidence of his provenance. The third and largest of these compendia, the *Chagi sanbu mun* (C. *Zikui sanbu wen* [Arranged and supplemented text of Zikui]) is a 1664 Korean reprint of a Ming-dynasty text, so a connection to China is beyond dispute, albeit a late one (Sørensen, 165–166, esp. n. 29). The three texts include *Chagi mun cholch'a chorye* (one volume, dated 1664), *Chagi sanbo mun* (one volume, 1649), *Chagi sanbu mun* (C. *Zikui sanbu wen,* thirty volumes, Ming text reprinted in Korea in 1664).

24. *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chae'ŭi pom'ŭm ch'aek chip,* in *Han'guk pulgyo chŏnsŏ* (Soul T'ukpyolsi: Tongguk taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1992), 11.458a–523c. Sørensen ("Bibliographical Survey," 183) represents Chiwon's compendium as "the most important of all ritual manuals from the second half of the Chosŏn dynasty." I thank Choe Kyung-won, currently a graduate student in the history of art department at the University of Kansas, for alerting me to the availability of this text.
25. These include the Chagi (C. Zikui) materials cited in note 23.
26. As in the Zhuhong/Zhipan text, the *Pom'ŭn ch'aek chip* sequences begin with securing of the ritual site, proceed through invitation and offering to the upper (or saintly) stations of the Three Jewels, follow with invitation of the mundane beings of the lower hall (through dispatch of emissaries to the four ministries), and conclude with purification and distribution of food and Dharma *(shishi)* to the mundane beings of the lower hall. However, in lieu of a binary division between upper (saintly) and lower (mundane) assemblies, the *Pom'ŭm ch'aek chip* typically distinguishes a third assembly consisting of the gods of the mundane realm (largely indigenous to China), which it sets off from the more lowly spirits and mortal beings of the mundane realms. The *Pom'ŭm ch'aek chip* sequences also omit the bestowal of precepts on the lower stations, as well as concluding Pure Land devotions, both of which are key to Zhipan/Zhuhong.
27. Catherine Bell, "Ritualization of Texts and Textualization of Ritual in the Codification of Taoist Liturgy," *History of Religions* 27.4 (May 1988): 368.
28. Ibid., 368–369.
29. These conventions hark back to Indian prototypes of the well-known *saptānuttarapūja* or "sevenfold peerless worship," but their presence in China is not reducible to any singular scriptural "source" or historical transmission, tantric, exoteric, or otherwise. See Daniel B. Stevenson, "The T'ien-t'ai Four Forms of Samādhi and Late North-South Dynasties, Sui, and Early T'ang Devotionalism" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1987); also, Kuo Li-ying, *Confession et contrition dans le bouddhisme chinois du Ve au Xe siècle* (Paris: Publications de l'École Francaise d'Extrême Orient, 1994); and Daniel B. Stevenson, "Protocols of Power: Tz'u-yün Tsun-shih (964–1032) and T'ien-t'ai Lay Buddhist Ritual in the Song," in *Buddhism in the Song,* ed. Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 340–408. The liturgical content and resonances of the *shuilu* are discussed in my forthcoming "Troublesome Crossings: The *Shuilu fahui* (Rite for the Creatures of Water and Land) and the 'Food Bestowal' *(shishi)* Motif in Later Imperial China."
30. See Marsha Weidner, ed., *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850–1850* (Lawrence, Kan.: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas; Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), 281–282; also Alexander Soper, *Kuo Jo-hsü's Experiences in Painting* (Washington, D.C.: American Academy of Learned Societies, 1951), 25, 135. The notice appears in two early-Song works on late-Tang painting, the *Yizhou minghua lu* (Record of famous painters from Szechwan, dated ca. 1006) and Guo Ruoxu's *Tuhua jianwen zhi* (Records of experiences in painting, ca. 1020–1075; trans. Soper).
31. Beata Grant, *Mount Lu Revisited: Buddhism in the Life and Writings of Su Shih* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), 144–149. For Su's verses and preface, see *Shuilu huazan,* in *Shishi tonglan, XZJ* 101.445b–450a.
32. *Shimen zhengtong, XZJ* 130.802a. The passage is an emended rehearsal of Zongze's *Shuilu yuanqi.*
33. *Fozu tongji, T* 49.321c–322a.
34. Two scrolls in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art have been identified as part of the 1454 set, and another (see fig. 5.6) was recently acquired by the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas, bringing the total of extant scrolls to thirty-eight. Caroline Gyss-Vermande, "Messagers divins et leur iconographie," *Arts Asiatiques* 46 (1991): 109, nn. 4 and 5; and idem, "Démons et marveilles: vision de la nature dans une peinture liturgique du XVe siècle," *Arts Asiatiques* (1988): 106, 108. Strickmann summarizes this material in *Mantras et mandarins,* 369–373; also see Weidner, *Latter Days of the Law,* 280–287.

35. Wu Liangcheng, ed., *Baoningsi Mingdai shuilu hua* (Beijing: Wenwu chuban she, 1985). Regrettably, the identifications and historical notes on the scrolls are filled with errors.
36. This may be true of the older of the two Musée Guimet sets as well. The secondary literature is not clear on this point.
37. Wang Haihang and Chen Yaolin, *Pilu si he Pilu si bihua: Pilu si Temple and Its Wall Paintings* (Shijiazhuang: Hebei meishu chuban she, 1984). This book is also plagued with misidentifications, as well as insufficient data on monastery layout, epigrapha, and so on.
38. Ibid., 2 (see both the Chinese and English versions of the preface).
39. Caroline Gyss-Vermande, review of "Wang Haihang et Chen Yaolin, *Pilu si he Pilu se bihua, Pilu si Temple and Its Wall Paintings*," *Arts Asiatiques* 42 (1987): 123; Strickmann, *Mantras et mandarins*, 371–372.
40. Ziqing, *Zengxiu jiaoyuan qinggui*, *XZJ* 101.763b5, an influential code for Tiantai public monasteries compiled in 1347 (based on a Southern Song code).
41. This is demonstrated in the life of more contemporary institutions. See Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*. Major commemorative and seasonal rites held in the central axis halls are surveyed in various monastic codes, including *Chixiu baichang qinggui* (1335 C.E.), *XZJ* 111.478–488 (fasc. 1–2); *Zengxiu jiaoyuan qinggui* (1347 C.E.), *XZJ* 101.692a–700a (fasc. 1–2); *Luyuan shigui* (1325 C.E.), *XZJ* 106.38b–45a (fasc. 4–5), *Baizhang qinggui zhengyi ji*, *XZJ* 111.529b–636b (fasc. 1–3).
42. *Shuilu* halls in the public Chan monasteries of Lingyin si and Tiantong si are depicted in thirteenth-century ground plans; see *Gozan jissetsu zu, Zengaku daijiten, bekkan* (Tokyo: Komazawa daigaku, 1978), 12–13; also, record of the *shuilu* halls at Lingzhi si and Upper Tianzhu si (two influential Vinaya and Tiantai institutions), in *Xianchun lin'an zhi*, in *Song-Yuan difang zhi congshu* (Taibei: Dahua shuju, 1987), 7:79.2b and 3a; and *Hangzhou Shang tianzhu jiangsi zhi* in *Zhongguo fosi shizhi huikan*, series 1 (Taibei: Zongqing tushu chuban gongsi, 1994), 26:6.13b.
43. Even inscriptions specifically associating a site or assemblage with the *shuilu* do not necessarily solve these problems. Dazu in Sichuan is riddled with sculpted cave sites bearing images topically related to the *shuilu* pantheon; cave 7 at Shizhuangshan, dated 1088, and cave 253 at Dazu beishan, dated 1001, bear Northern Song votive inscriptions that mention performances of the *shuilu* rite. Strickmann, relying on a report by Ding Mingyi, concludes that "[these images] were created for celebration of the *shuilu*, in which they played a role," when the inscriptions in question merely state that a *shuilu* feast was performed on the occasion of the dedication "to express *(biao)* our celebratory praises and prayers *(qingzan)*," leaving the relationship between image, rite, and even the site of the performance (much less the possibility of ongoing performances) undetermined. Strickmann, *Mantras et mandarins*, 487, n. 19; Ding Mingyi, "Sichuan shiku zashi," *Wenwu*, no. 8 (1988): 53–54.
44. Strickmann, *Mantras et mandarins*, 392–393.
45. On this subject, see Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 120–137.
46. The *shuilu* narrative of origin *(yuanqi)* is recited by the chief liturgist as part of the "announcement of intent" *(yizhi)* to the assembled deities, while the historical figures themselves are enshrined at a special altar station dedicated specifically to the "*shuilu* luminaries." *Shuilu yigui*, *XZJ* 129.550b–551a and 552b–555a; *Huiben* 2:122 and 123, 165–171.
47. See, for example, the articles on the *shuilu* in Mochizuki Shinko, *Mochizuki Bukkyō daijiten* (Kyoto: Sekai seiten kanko kyokai, 1955–1963), 2878; *Zhongguo fojiao*, ed. Zhongguo fojiao xiehui (Beijing: Zhishi chubanshe, 1982), 2:383–387; and "Ming Dynasty Shuilu Paintings at Bao Ning Si," in *Baoningsi Mingdai shuilu hua*, 212–214.
48. Yang E, *Shuilu dazhai lingji ji*, in Zongxiao, *Shishi tonglan*, *XZJ* 101.440a.
49. Ibid. A postscript appended to the record states that it was composed by Yang E in 1071 and copied off a stele at Jinshan by the monk Fazong in 1125. Yang E's narrative is repeated nearly verbatim in Zongze's *Shuilu yüanqi* (dated 1096), as well as in later chronicles such as *Shimen zhengtong* 4 (dated 1237), *XZJ* 130.802a; and *Fozu tongji* 33 and 37 (dated 1269), *T* 49.321b–c and 348c.
50. Yang E himself refers to the *shuilu* as "the grand unrestricted *(wuzhe)* feast/fast of land and sea," at one point invoking the historical example of Liang emperor Wu's "establishing of unrestricted feasts/fasts." See *Shuilu zhai yiwen houxu*, in *Shishi tonglan*, *XZJ* 101.450a. Similar references appear throughout later Song and Yuan sources. The paradigm of the "unrestricted assembly" *(wuzhe fahui)* originated from tales

of the Indian Buddhist emperor Asoka's quinquinnial or *pañcavârsika* festival, the legend of which was made available to Emperor Wu around 512 C.E. through Sanghapala's translation of the *Aśokāvadāna* and related works. See *Ayuwang jing, T* 2043. Also, John Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka: A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), 17–18, 91–97. For discussion of the "unrestricted assemblies" and other Buddhist ritual activities of Emperor Wu, see Suwa Gijun, "Ryō Butei Bukkyō kankei shiseki nenpu kō," *Bukkyō shigaku kenkyō* (November 1983): 45–76 and (March 1984): 72–94; also Mori Mikisaburō, *Ryō no Butei* (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1956), 134–169, esp. 165–167; and Kamata Shigeo, *Chūgoku Bukkyō shi,* vol. 3: *Nanbokuchō no Bukkyō, jō* (Tokyo: Daigaku shuppankai, 1984), 204–233.

Buddhist catalogues of the Sui and Tang periods allege that, between 516 and 517 C.E., Emperor Wu ordered a staff of eminent clerics to search the sutras for materials to be used in state ceremonies for pacification and protection of the realm. Although we find no mention of a *shuilu* rite per se, the scale and focus of these compilations (e.g., "averting natural disasters, . . . eliminating sinful obstacles, feeding ghosts and spirits, and making offerings to dragon kings") is consistent with certain aspects of the *shuilu.* See Fei Zhangfang (ca. 597), *Lidai sanbao ji, T* 49.99b9–21; Daoxuan (664), *Da Tang neidian lu, T* 55.266c; and Daosheng (ca. 730), *Kaiyuan shijiao lu, T* 55.537c–538a. Sengyou's *Fayuan zayuan yuanshi ji mulu* (in *Chu sanzang ji ji, T* 55.90b–93b) is also revealing as an index of Liang Buddhist ceremonial.

51. An intriguing exception appears in Daoxuan's essay on "generating merits" *(xingfu)* in *Xu gaoseng zhuan, T* 50.700a8–12. Here we find mention of a rite for "compassionate repentance on behalf of beings of the six destinies" associated with the general region and period of the Southern Liang. Although reminiscent of the *shuilu,* a more historically feasible candidate for this ritual is the *cibei daochang chanfa* or the *Liang huang chan,* a second major rite also attributed to Emperor Wu (see *Cibei daochang chanfa,* 10 fasc., *T* 1909). Yoshioka Yoshitoyo believes that a manual for the latter with an attribution to Emperor Wu can be traced to at least the early ninth century; Shioiri Ryōdō finds evidence to push it back even further, possibly to the seventh century or to Emperor Wu's time. Since the Song period, the *cibei daochang chanfa* circulated with its own distinctive narrative of origin. During the Ming it became standard practice to incorporate the *Cibei daochang* into *shuilu* performances as one of the ancillary rites of the outer altar. See Shioiri Ryōdō, "*Jihidōjōsenbō* no seiritsu," in *Dōkyō kenkyū ronshū* (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1977); also, Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, *Dōkyō to Bukkyō,* 2:391–400.
52. Amoghavajra was active as a translator in Chang'an between 746 and 774, Śikṣānanda between 700 and 704. For their versions of the Sutra on the Dhārāni for the Deliverance of the Flaming-Face [*or* Mouth] Hungry Ghost, see note 3.
53. Zanning, *Song gaoseng zhuan, T* 50.827a–b. The connection with Daoying may have been made by Sichuan monks looking to establish the *shuilu* as a relic of high-Tang Buddhism. Strickmann fails to note this point; *Mantras et mandarins,* 380 and 382.
54. The *shuilu* does not appear in Zanning's essays in *Song gaoseng zhuan,* in his *Seng shi lue* (*T* 2126), or in Daocheng's *Shishi yaolan* (Survey of Buddhist Practices; dated 1020, *T* 2127), works in which one might expect to find mention of such a high-profile rite.
55. The cultic status of Liang Emperor Wu and Baozhi during the late Tang and Song are discussed in Makita Tairyō, "Hōshi oshō den kō" in Makita, *Chūgoku Bukkyōshi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Daitō shuppan, 1984), 2:56–84. Idem, *Tōhō gakuhō* 26 (March 1956); also, Bernard Faure, *Rhetoric of Immediacy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 96–131.
56. Lu Jianzeng, *Jinshan zhi,* and Yang Hongfa, *Xu jinshan zhi* (combined edition, Taibei: Xinwenfeng, 1973). Wang Zao's *Jinshan longyousi ji* (*Jinshanzhi* 9.3a–b) states that the island housed a Daoist abbey known as Longyou guan during the Tang period. Zhenzong endowed Jinshan as an imperially sponsored Buddhist institution with the name Dragon Sojourn Monastery (Longyou si) after an auspicious dream he experienced while on a tour of the region. The name was changed to Zexin si by imperial edict in 1021. See Hong Mai's *Chongjian fodian ji,* in *Jinshan zhi* 9.4a–b. For Jōjin's visit to the site, see *San Tendai Godai san ki, Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho,* vol. 115; also, Robert Borgen, "*San Tendai Godai san ki* as a Source for the Study of Sung History," *Bulletin of Sung and Yüan Studies* 19 (1987): 5–6.
57. Zeng Gong, *Chongjian shuilu tang ji,* in *Jinshan zhi* 9.2a–b.
58. *Jinshan zhi,* 3.2a–6b. Foyin Liaoyuan, friend and spiritual mentor to Su Shi, promoted the *shuilu* cult

among nationally prominent clergy, officials, and merchants who visited Jinshan during his tenure as abbot there. See *Fozu lidai tongzai* 19, *T* 49.676b–a; for Su Shi's connections with Foyin, see Grant, *Mount Lu Revisited,* 101–103, 220–221, n. 14.

59. *Shuilu zhai yiwen houxu,* in *Shishi tonglan, XZJ* 101.450a.
60. *Shuilu faxiang zan bing xu,* in *Shishi tonglan, XZJ* 101:443b; Zongze's *Shuilu yuanqi,* ibid., *XZJ* 101.442a and 443a. Of the two references to the *shuilu* that appear in Zanning's *Song gaoseng zhuan,* one is connected with Loyang (Zunhui, d. 945), the other with Sichuan (Shouzhen, d. 971), *T* 50.884c and 871c.
61. Zongze notes its presence in "the regions of the Yangzi and Huai [basins], the two [circuits of Eastern and Western] Zhe, Quan[-zhou], Guang[-zhou], and Fujian." *Shuilu yuanqi* (dated 1096), *Shishi tonglan, XZJ* 101.442a.
62. See the 108 daily practices of Yanshou as listed in *Zhijue chanshi zixinglu, XZJ* 111.163b–164a. Zunshi describes a "vulgar" rite for "offering food to the orphaned souls of water and land" based loosely on the Sutra on the Dhārāni for the Deliverance of the Flaming-Mouth Hungry Ghost, the performance entailing offering of food to ghosts and immortals in chapels known as *shuilu* cloisters. *Shishi zhengming,* in *Jinyuanji, XZJ* 101.236a–b; *Shishi tonglan, XZJ* 101.427b.
63. See Makita Tairyō, "Suiriku-e no shōkō," *Chūgoku Bukkyō shi kenkyū* 2:213–235. For a good overview of the popularization of purgatory during this period, see Stephen Teiser, "The Growth of Purgatory," in *Religion and Society in Tang and Sung China,* ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993).
64. For an informative study of the effect of geography on the national dissemination of local cult during the Song, see Terry Kleeman, "The Expansion of the Wen-chang Cult," in *Religion and Society in Tang and Sung China,* 45–73.
65. Strickmann's claim that the *shuilu* was perpetuated exclusively by monks of "Pure Land" persuasion is a puzzling one (Strickmann, *Mantras et mandarins,* 403, 411), since the historical record indicates overwhelmingly that the *shuilu* was from the beginning (and throughout its history) closely tied to the Chan school. On Confucian criticisms of the *shuilu,* see Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 85–89; and idem, *Chu Hsi's Family Rituals* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 79.

    About the *shuilu* halls the Tiantong, Lingyin, Lingzhi, and Tianzhu monasteries, see note 42. The *shuilu* hall of Jinshan is mentioned in a stele by Lou Yue, dated 1203. See *Jinshan xingsheng wanshou chansi ji,* in *Yuhang xian zhi,* 15.12b. By the time the Japanese pilgrim Eisai (1141–1214) visited China around the end of the twelfth century, *shuilu* halls were prevalent enough for him to include them as a regular feature in his model descriptions of Song (especially Chan) monastic organization. See *Kōzen gokoku ron, T* 2543, vol. 80.15a19–20.
66. Hong Mai (1123–1202) and the historical value of his 420–fascicle *Yijian zhi* are discussed in Valerie Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127–1276* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 17–23. For specific references to the *shuilu,* see Hong Mai, *Yijian zhi,* 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 17–18, 120–121, 423, 456, 457, 461, 465, 497, 1602, 1742.
67. Zhuhong, *Shuilu yiwen,* in *Zhuhong suibi, Yunqi fahui,* 63a–b (*LCQJ,* 3747–3748); also, in *Yunqi Zhuhong sanbi* 1.46 (*LCQJ,* 4001); Yirun, *Huiben,* 387–389. Zhixu, *Shuilu dazhai shu,* in *Lingfeng Ouyi dashi zonglun,* vol. 18 of *Ouyi dashi quanji* (Taibei: Fojiao shuju, 1989), *juan* 7, 12a–13b (11381–11384).
68. *Shuilu yiwen,* in *Huiben* 6:387–388.
69. *Shuilu dazhai shu,* in *Lingfeng Ouyi dashi zonglun, juan* 7, 4:13.
70. Makita, "Suiriku'e shōkō." The precedent for imperial sponsorship of *shuilu* performances at Jinshan probably goes back to the Southern Song. In the spirit of Emperor Zhenzong some years earlier, Southern Song Empress Cining showered favors on Jinshan, including sponsorship of *shuilu* ceremonies at the island and in the capital at Hangzhou.
71. *Yuansou Xingduan chanshi yulu, XZJ* 124.26b–27b.
72. The 1314 and 1315 performances, convened at the request of the empress dowager, are commemorated in a stele erected at Jinshan by Yingshen. See *Shuilu dahui beiji,* in Lu Jianzeng, *Jinshan zhi* 9.7b–8a.
73. *Yuejiang Zhengyin chanshi yulu, XZJ* 123.231–233.
74. See, esp., *Shuilu sheng tso,* in *Chushi Fanqi heshang yulu, XZJ* 124.291a–293a.

75. See *Shishi jigulue xuji, T* 49.425a. Mount Jiang also carried strong historical connections with Emperor Wu of Liang and his state-sponsored Buddhist rites. Formerly known as Mount Zhong, it was a vital Buddhist center during the Liang dynasty and a favorite haunt of the emperors' spiritual advisors Baozhi and Sengyou. The name "unrestricted assembly" *(wuzhe fahui)* harks back to the state cultus of Emperor Wu, as well as to Song- and Yuan-period precedents for identifying these unrestricted assemblies with the *shuilu.*

 The Ming court ordered Song Lian (1310–1381) to make a report of numinal episodes connected with three of the *guangjian* rites on Mount Jiang. For postscripts for three such records, see *Song Wenxian gong quanji (Sibu beiyao)* (Taibei: Zhonghua shuju, 1965–1966) (hereafter, *SBBY*), 9.4, 13.14; and *Song xueshi wenji (Sibu congkan)* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1919–1936) (hereafter, *SBCK*), 4.14.
76. *Yuansou Xingduan yulu, XZJ* 124.254a; also *Yuejiang Zhengyin chanshi yulu* 1, *XZJ* 123.231–233.
77. *Yuansou Xingduan yulu, XZJ* 124.254a.
78. *Shishi jigu lue xuji, T* 49.425a.
79. *Shuilu dahui beiji,* in Lu Jianzeng, *Jinshan zhi,* 9.7b–8a.
80. *Chushi fanqi chanshih yulu, XZJ* 124.294a and 295a; also, the beautifully composed announcement for the Ming *guangjian fahui* cited in *Shishi jigu lue xuji, T* 49.425a.
81. For the Ming directive for *jiao* institutions, see *Shishi jigu lue xuji, T* 49.932a. Also Chün-fang Yü, *Renewal of Buddhism in China,* 148; Sung-peng Hsu, *A Buddhist Leader in Ming China:* The Life and Thought of Han-shan Te-ching (University Park, Pa.: Penn State University Press, 1979), 49–52; Zhang Shengyan, *Minmatsu Chūgoku Bukkyō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sankibo busshorin, 1975), 53–76; and Ryūchi Kiyoshi, *Shina Bukkyō shigaku* 2.4 (1938): 9–29; and idem, "Mindai no yuga kyōsō," *Tōhō gakuhō* 11.1 (1940): 4–5:513.
82. Zhang Shengyan, *Minmatsu Chūgoku Bukkyō no kenkyū,* 57.
83. See David Tod Roy, trans., *The Plum in the Golden Vase (or Jinpingmei)* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 1:163–169, for one of the wilder depictions of the *shuilu.* Also, Wang Jinglin and Xu Tao, *Jinpingmei zhong de fozong daoying* (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1991), 134–140. Compare these accounts with Zhuhong's "Rules for the *Shuilu* Ritual Sanctuary," in *Shuilu daochang guiyue* in the *guiyue* section of *Yunqi fahui,* 64–65 (*LCQJ,* 4922–4924).
84. See Zheng Yingfang (Zhiguan), *Shuilu daochang falun baochan, XZJ* 130.173a.
85. *Shuilu yiwen,* in *Zhuhong suibi,* 62 (*LCQJ,* 3747); also see the second *Shuilu yiwen,* in *Zhuhong sanbi,* 1.47 (*LCQJ,* 4001).
86. Mount Yuebo is on East Lake, some twenty-five kilometers east of the Yin county seat in Mingzhou. About Shi Hao's founding of the *shuilu* hall at Yuebo, see the biography of Zeyue and related notices in *Fozu tongji, T* 49.236a, 321c, 428b–c. For Shi Hao's religious activities in Minzhou, see *Baoqing siming zhi,* in *Song-Yuan difang zhi congshu* 8:9.3a–17b; also his collected writings in *Maofeng zhenyin manlu,* 52 fasc., *Siku quan shu zhenben, erji* (Taibei: Shangwu shuju, 1971), 258–261.
87. *Fozu tongji, T* 49.321c–322a. For corroboration of the ancestral and elitist character of Shi Hao's use of Buddhist "food bestowal" *(shishi)* rites, see his *Shidafu shishi wen* (Litany for literati-sponsored rites of food bestowal), which focuses on gratitude to Heaven and Earth, the gods and spirits, sovereigns and officials, and ancestral kin for sustaining of life and prosperity; *Shishi tonglan, XZJ* 101.439b–440a. He expressed similar sentiments in a dedicatory address for a *shuilu* rite composed when he was prefect of Huzhou; see his *Huzhou chiyu shuilu shu* in *Maofeng zhenyin manlu, Siku quanshu zhenben, erji,* 260:23.9a.
88. See Chün-fang Yü, *Renewal of Buddhism in China,* 1–28. Timothy Brook has noted how local elites, faced with declining influence as a result of changing social and economic circumstances, sought through "reform" to reassert the values and ritual forms with which their identity was so deeply intertwined. As the scion of a family of such declining elites (and an examination failure), Zhuhong fits this description perfectly. Brook, "Funerary Ritual and the Building of Lineages in Late Imperial China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 49.2 (December 1989): 465–499; also, idem, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late Ming-Qing Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).
89. Popularization of Zhuhong's *Shuilu yigui* likely came about during the early Qing dynasty, through the Kangxi and Yongzheng (r. 1723–1736) emperors' great admiration for Zhuhong and their efforts to regularize the Buddhist sangha through national ordination centers such as the famous Huiju (Longchang)

Monastery on Mount Baohua. About the monastery and its founding, see Liu Mingfang, *Baohuashan zhi,* in *Zhongguo fosi shizhi huikan,* series 1, 41; also, Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), 104–105.

90. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice,* 134.

91. See, for example Yingshen, *Shuilu dahui beiji,* in *Jinshan zhi* 17. Roy, *The Plum in the Golden Vase,* 1:164. Also, Wang Jinglin and Xu Tao, *Jinpingmei zhong de fo zong daoying,* 135. Having been reworked by Zhuhong, we cannot trust Zhipan's *Shuilu yigui* to reflect accurately the situation in the thirteenth century.

92. Yirun, *Huiben,* 17–18. Yirun is unclear on the actual number of altars (he mentions only four: the *Liang huang chan,* Avatamsaka, Various Sutras, and Pure Land altars). Kamata Shigeo reports that contemporary *shuilu* performances in Taiwan and Hong Kong usually have six, these four plus Lotus and Healing Buddha altars; Kamata Shigeo, *Chūgoku no Bukkyō girei* (Tokyo: Daizō shuppan kabushiki kaisha, 1986), 126–127. Zheng Yingfang (Zhiguan) replaces the six rites of the outer altar with the single practice of his *Falun baochan* (Repentance of the Dharma wheel) composed especially for use in the *shuilu;* see *Shuilu daochang falun baochan, XZJ* 129.692; also, *Shuilu tonglun, XZJ* 129.611b. Zheng also provides for Huayan, Pure Land, Releasing Life, and Feeding and Releasing Hungry Ghosts *(fang yankou)* altars, with special ceremonies for the latter two, performed on the sixth and seventh days, respectively; see Zheng, *Tonglun, XZJ* 129.610b, 614a, 620a.

Yirun (*Huiben* 1:62) mentions the *fang yankou* rite as one of the "meritorious activities" to be performed at the outer altar, but gives no specifications for its place in either the altar arrangement or ritual sequence. Zheng Yingfang includes it at the end of the seven days (see *Tonglun, XZJ* 129.614a, 620a, 684a), while Kamata notes that in Taiwan and Hong Kong it is usually performed at the beginning of the seven days (Kamata, *Chūgoku no Bukkyō girei,* 125). Strickmann's claim that the "interior altar" is reserved for generation of merit for the living, the outer altar for generation of merit for the dead is not supported by the *shuilu* literature, although the outer altar may contain dedicatory prayer slips for the dead at its Pure Land altar. See Strickmann, *Mantras et mandarins,* 393–394.

93. Kamata, *Chūgoku no Bukkyō girei,* 123–125; Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries,* 152–156. See also Welch, *Practice of Chinese Buddhism,* 296–297.

94. In the Korean *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chae'ŭi* texts, the inner altar is typically divided into three sections: an upper hall, which corresponds closely to the upper hall of the Chinese sources; a middle hall; and a lower hall. The last two are simply a subdivision of the lower hall of Zhuhong and the early-Song sources.

95. See Yang E's *Xuanbai shaoqing shangtang bawei sheng zhong* and *Xuanbai shaoqing xiatang bawei shengfan,* as well as Su Shi's *Shuilu faxiang zan,* in Zongxiao, *Shishi tonglan, XZJ* 101:443a–445a and 445b–450a, respectively.

96. Zhipan and Zhuhung, *Shuilu yigui, XZJ* 129.545b–551a.

97. *Shuilu yigui, XZJ* 129.560a–566a. The ritual proceedings for the lower court also provide for an additional special series of offerings to designated dead of the donor's family, as well as the *guhun,* although neither is provided with a designated altar seat. See *Shuilu yigui, XZJ* 129.566a–571b, and *Huiben* 5:226–245.

98. Yirun discusses these emendations in his opening *Shuilu dayi lun'guan,* in *Huiben* 1:6, 8.

99. Yoshioka, "Segaki shisō no Chūgoku teki juyō," 406–408. See Wu Liangcheng, ed., *Baoningsi Mingdai shuilu hua;* also, *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chae'ŭi pom'ŭm ch'aek chip,* in *Hanguk pulgyo chŏnsŏ,* 11.458a–523c.

100. Gyss-Vermande, "Démons et marveilles," 121. On the altar arrangements for Daoist rites, see John Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 18–48; also, idem, "Taoist Ritual Space and Dynastic Legitimacy," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 8 (1995): 87–94. For the rite of the Yellow Register, see Matsumoto Kichi, "Dōkyō to shūkyō girei," in Fukui Fumimasa et al., *Dōkyō wa nani ka,* 191–237. On ancestral altars, the *mingtang,* and the *feng* and *shan* rites during the Tang, see Howard J. Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk: Ritual and Symbol in the Legitimation of the T'ang Dynasty* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985), 170–188. On the symbolics of bureaucratic hierarchy in Chinese ritual, see Emily Ahern, *Chinese Ritual and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Steven Sangren, *History and Magical Power in a Chinese Community* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1987); Stephen Feuchtwang, *The Imperial Metaphor: Popular Religion in China* (London: Routledge, 1992).

101. Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China,* esp. 45–67; Evelyn S. Rawski, "A Historian's Approach to Chinese Death Ritual," in *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China,* ed. James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 29–33. Also see Ebrey's "The Early Stages in the Development of Descent Group Organization," in *Kinship Organization in Late Imperial China: 1000–1940,* ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and James L. Watson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 16–61.
102. Compare *Shuilu yigui, XZJ* 129.565b–566a, with genealogical arrangements described in Ebrey, *Chu Hsi's Family Rituals,* 8–10, 167, n. 46.
103. For example, the Solar and Lunar Emperors, the Great Thearchs of the [Palace of] Purple Tenuity of the North and South Poles, the Officials of the Three Ministries (Heaven, Earth, and the Waters), the Sagely Emperors of the Five Marchmounts, the Sovereigns of the Four Seas and Four Great Confluences, to name a few. Compare Yang E's pantheon in *Shishi tonglan, XZJ* 101.448a–b, with that of Zhuhong in *Shuilu yigui* 3, *XZJ* 129.560a–b, and the rosters of the Yellow Register as given by Matsumoto Kōichi, "Dōkyō to shūkyō girei," 227–228.
104. *Fozu tongji, T* 49.419a.
105. The attributes and limitations of these stylistic categories are discussed by Stanley K. Abe, "Art and Practice in a Fifth-century Chinese Buddhist Cave Temple," *Ars Orientalis* 20 (1990): 1–17; Julia K. Murray, "Buddhism and Early Narrative Illustration in China," *Archives of Asian* Art 48 (1995): 17–31; Wu Hung, "What Is *bianxiang?*" *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 52.1 (June 1992); Paul Katz, "The Function of Temple Murals in Imperial China: The Case of the Yung-lo Kung," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 21 (1993); and Robert H. Sharf, "Visualization and Mandala in Shingon Buddhism," in *The Living Image: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Their Monastic Contexts,* ed. Robert F. Sharf and Elizabeth Horton Sharf (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, forthcoming).
106. Yirun, *Huiben,* 6:393–394; also, 395–440.
107. See *Huiben* 3:135.
108. See Yirun, *Huiben* 1:18 and 22; also, Zhuhong, *Shuilu yigui, XZJ* 129.527a; and Zhixu's *Shuilu dazhai shu,* in *Lingfeng Ouyi dashi zonglun, Ouyi dashi quanji,* 7.12a–13b (11381–11384). This arrangement conforms closely with that described in Yang E's eleventh-century *Shuilu zhai yiwen houxu* (*Shishi tonglan, XZJ* 101.450a), the major exception being that Yang requires an additional "tripitaka master" *(sanzang)* whose special duty it is to consecrate the ambrosial water used to empower the food offerings.
109. See, for example, *Shuilu yigui, XZJ* 129.576b.
110. Welch, *Practice of Chinese Buddhism,* 191; Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries,* 152–156.
111. *Huiben* 1:16, 18 and 29; also *Shuilu yigui, XZJ* 129.534a.
112. *Huiben* 1:16.
113. Zhuhong, *Shuilu yigui, XZJ* 129.534a and 544b. Also see Zhuhong, *Shuilu daochang guiyue* (Rules for the *shuilu* altar space), in the appended *guiyue* section of *Yunqi fahui,* 64b–65b (*LCQJ,* 4922–4923).
114. Kamata, *Chūgoku no Bukkyō girei,* 134–135.
115. Comparing the northern Jinshan *shuilu* to that of Zhuhong's "southern" tradition, Zhixu says of Zhuhong's line:

> They secured the boundary [for the ritual precincts] and guarded it carefully. Apart from the chief liturgist, the two cantors, the chief sponsor, and five acolytes serving incense and lamps, all other persons were kept beyond the partition, where they watched and performed obeisance from afar [or: observed the rite from afar]. They were not allowed to enter the altar space. And when [the officiants] within the altar passed in and out, they were always required to change their clothing and bathe. It is [restrictions such as these] that allow one to speak of "making offering according to correct ritual procedure" *(rufa gongyang).* It bears no resemblance whatsoever to the [Jinshan tradition's] excessive hanging of scrolls in all directions, or the [custom] of allowing men and women to mingle together and stroll about leisurely taking in the sights, or allowing persons who drink wine and eat meat, smoke and eat garlic to indiscriminately pollute this holy rite. (Zhixu, *Shuilu dazhai shu,* in *Lingfeng Ouyi dashi conglun, juan* 7, 13a–b)

116. For the installation sequence, see *Shuilu yigui, XZJ* 129.537–545; *Huiben* 2:103–133.

117. Zhiyi, *Fangdeng chanfa,* in *Guoqing bailu, T* 46.797b. For further examples, see Zunshi's *Wangsheng jingtu chanyuan i, T* 47.491a, and *Jinguangming chanfa buzhuyi, T* 46.959a, as well as Zongmi's *Yuanjue jing xiuzheng yi, XZJ* 128.728b–729a, all three of which were regarded as model ritual tracts in the later imperial period.
118. *Shuilu dayi lunguan,* in *Huiben* 1:9.
119. *Shuilu yigui, XZJ* 129.527; *Huiben* 1:67–89.
120. See Lu Jianzeng, *Jinshan zhi,* 1.11a and 3.1a–3.9b.
121. Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries,* 152–156.
122. See Grant, *Mount Lu Revisited,* 146; also Su Shi, *Jiesha,* in *Dongbo zhilin, Chou chi biji* (Suzhou: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 1983), 226–227.

LITERATI CULTURE

Calligraphy and Poetry

3

Buddhist Literati and Literary Monks: Social and Religious Elements in the Critical Reception of Zhang Jizhi's Calligraphy

Amy McNair

LITERATI CALLIGRAPHY CRITICISM was dominated, first in the Six Dynasties and Tang periods, by Daoistic nature similes used to capture the artist's creativity (e.g., "like a rock falling from a high peak, bounding but about to crumble"), then in the Song dynasty was complicated by the rise of a competing Confucian paradigm of morality ("seeing the man in his writing"). The Song-dynasty contests between the Daoist and Confucian camps over the critical reputations of such great calligraphers as Wang Xizhi (303–361) and Yan Zhenqing (709–785) are well known.[1] Rarely have we seen calligraphy criticism from a Buddhist perspective, though, either in China or the West. A study of the critical reception of the work of the Southern Song calligrapher Zhang Jizhi (1186–1266) reveals tensions between Confucian and Buddhist interpretations—even differing Buddhist interpretations—of this artist's achievement in the Yuan and Ming dynasties.[2] His critics included Confucian instructors, literary Buddhist monks, and lay-Buddhist literati, and their diverse reactions to this Buddhist artist's calligraphy illuminate an intriguing case of socially and religiously based conflicts in perception.

Zhang Jizhi was a devout Buddhist householder and a friend of disciples of the Chan master Wuzhun Shifan (1177–1249) at Tiantong Monastery in the Tiantai Mountains, south of modern-day Ningbo.[3] He was also a scholar-official whose family had filled high positions in government for several generations.[4] In modern scholarship, Zhang Jizhi is considered the last great calligrapher of the Southern Song. He has long been appreciated in Japan, where one sign of his popularity in Zen circles is his well-known inscription reading *fangzhang,* "abbot's quarters," now in the Tofuku-ji, Kyoto.[5] Copies of this inscription hang at other Zen establishments, such as Daitoku-ji. By contrast, the critical reception of his work in China was contested, apparently in accord with each critic's own particular social, philosophical, and religious concerns.

Zhang Jizhi's extant calligraphy may be divided into three categories. One consists of large characters, in a horizontal format, written in the so-called *Song kai,* or Song-dynasty regular script, an informal regular script that incorporates elements of running script *(xingshu).* Zhang wrote these characters with dark, thick, rough brushstrokes that incorporate the use of "flying white" *(feibai),* a dry brush technique that spares out the white ground in streaks. The composition of these characters tends toward squareness, with the occasional eccentric stroke.

Examples are the *fangzhang* inscription and transcriptions of poems by the Tang-dynasty poet Du Fu, now in the Liaoning Provincial Museum (fig. 3.1) and the Chishaku-in and Enkaku-ji, in Kyoto.[6]

Zhang's medium-sized regular script forms another category. It is found in formal documents such as his sutra transcriptions (fig. 3.2) and in the *Epitaph for Li Kan,* now in the Fujii Yurinkan, Kyoto.[7] The regular script Zhang Jizhi used in writing sutras is more delicate and fluid than that of the Du Fu poem scrolls, but it has the same unusual and distinctive style. Most remarkable is the extraordinary variety of thick and thin strokes, which creates a wonderful visual drama as the thickly drawn, dark characters give way to finely drawn, light ones, creating a nearly three-dimensional effect. In addition, Zhang often emphasized the initial strokes of his characters, so that many characters are darker and heavier on the left-hand side. Examples in fig. 3.2 are the characters *du* (in the third column, the sixth character from the top) and *ju* (fourth column, ninth character), where the left-hand semantic element is written in thick black strokes, with the phonetic element to the right written in a much finer line.



Figure 3.1 Zhang Jizhi, *Two Poems by Du Fu,* detail. Southern Song dynasty, 1250. Ink on paper. Liaoning Provincial Museum. Reproduced from *Zhonghua wuqian-nian wenwu jikan. Fashu bian 5* (Taibei: Zhonghua wuqiannian wenwu jikan bianji weiyuanhui, 1984–1988), 62.

A third type of writing is seen in personal documents written in a running-cursive hand. In a personal letter written to the Chan monk Daxie (fig. 3.3), again we see the dramatic alteration between thick and fine strokes, but with less weight on the left side of the characters. Instead, character compositions angle upward on the right side, so that right-hand elements appear to float slightly above elements on the left. The delicate ligatures between strokes, the smooth swelling of individual strokes, and the great variety in shapes of dots, along with the rake to the upper right, are all hallmarks of the style of the Northern Song calligrapher Mi Fu (1052–1107). Zhang Jizhi's echo of Mi Fu was not at all unusual, but typical of the pervading influence of Mi Fu's style in the Southern Song.[8]

Surprisingly, brushwork so deft did not win Zhang Jizhi universal admiration. In a colophon to one of Zhang's transcriptions of the Lotus Sutra, the Ming-dynasty connoisseur An Shifeng wrote, "Men in the past reviled Zhang Jizhi's calligraphy as vulgar writing. But when I examine the expressions of his brush, [I sense] he did not intend to be unorthodox, but only to make an image of his feelings."[9]

Who were these "men in the past" who reviled Zhang Jizhi's style? One was Zheng Shao

(fl. ca. 1324–1328), a Confucian instructor in Fujian, who wrote a text recording his views on the history and technique of calligraphy. This text is arranged in question-and-answer form, and in the section where he critiques the calligraphers of the past we read:

> *Question:* Wu Yue, Zhang Xiaoxiang, or Fan Chengda—do they have method?
> *Answer:* If they have method, then there is no method in all the world. That being the case, did Zhang Jizhi and his followers finish this fall from grace?

Here the contemporary commentator, Liu Youding, adds:

> *The question is:* From Zhang Jizhi onward, was the Way of Calligraphy entirely in ruins?
> *Answer:* Alas! Like cracks in a smooth floor![10]



Figure 3.2 Zhang Jizhi, *Diamond Sutra,* two leaves. Southern Song dynasty, 1246. Ink on paper. The Art Museum, Princeton University. John B. Elliott Collection.

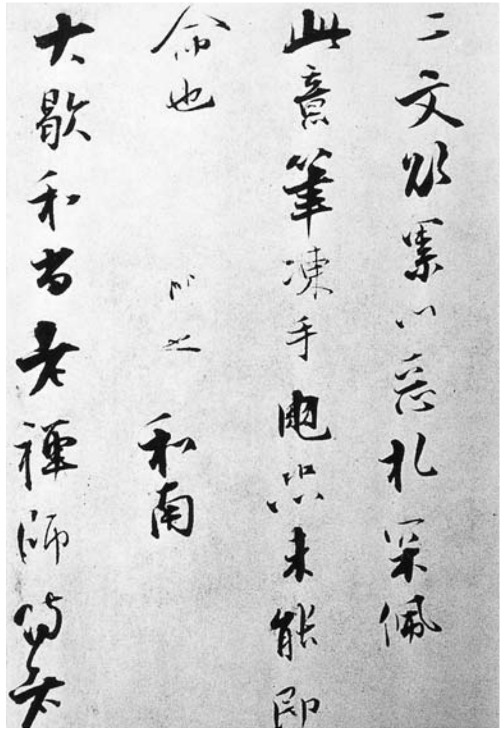


Figure 3.3 Zhang Jizhi, *Feiming tie.* Southern Song dynasty. Collection unknown. Reproduced from *Shodō zenshū,* 26 vols., 3d ed. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1966–1969), v. 16, pl. 87.

According to Zheng Shao, the styles of these men crazed the level and uniform veneer of the Way of Calligraphy. Perhaps he even meant to suggest that their manner of writing actually resembled "cracks in a smooth floor."

What was so irregular about the styles of Wu Yue, Zhang Xiaoxiang, and Fan Chengda? Wu Yue (fl. ca. 1115–1156) was a prominent government official of the early Southern Song and a celebrated calligrapher at the court of Emperor Gaozong (r. 1127–1162). As Marilyn Wong-Gleysteen has pointed out, his everyday manner of writing resembled the writing of the Northern Song calligraphers Mi Fu and Cai Xiang (1012–1067).[11] However, Wu Yue also invented a new kind of writing called "gossamer thread script" *(yousi shu).* This unorthodox cursive script he produced with a very thin, unmodulated, continuous line, which indeed has the visual effect of floating cobwebs.[12] This type of writing was much too precious for many critics, being at once manneristic, unclassical in method, and lacking in potential for expressive gesture. Not many works by Wu Yue remain, mostly letters and colophons, but his two extant inscriptions are pagoda epitaphs for the Buddhist monks Meditation Master Huizhao (1153) and Master Jingyan (1156).[13]

The second individual criticized here, Zhang Xiaoxiang (1133–1170), was Zhang Jizhi's illustrious uncle, who gained imperial recognition as a poet and calligrapher before his untimely death at thirty-eight *sui.* Like his nephew, he cultivated connections with Chan monks. One of his best-known works of calligraphy is an epitaph of 1158 for Meditation Master Hongzhi of the Tiantong Monastery (fig. 3.4).[14] This work deliberately echoes the style of Chu Suiliang (596–658), as seen in his *Preface to the Buddhist Canon,* which was engraved on a stele at the Large Wild Goose Pagoda in Chang'an in 653 (fig. 3.5). Chu Suiliang's *Preface* is one of the most famous Buddhist works in the history of Chinese calligraphy and has served as a model for many generations of calligraphers. Another piece of writing by Zhang Xiaoxiang (fig. 3.6), a colophon to a scroll of poems by the famous Northern Song poet, calligrapher, and Chan devotee Huang Tingjian (1045–1105), shows how Zhang Xiaoxiang constructed his style from the four-square character structures and heavy strokes of the eighth-century calligrapher Yan Zhenqing and the dynamic, highly modulated brushwork of Mi Fu.[15] This was a common blend of styles in the Southern Song, whereby the weightiness of Yan's style was quickened by the whimsy of Mi's. Among those who employed it were Emperor Ningzong (r. 1195–1224) and Emperor Lizong (r. 1225–1264).[16]

The other person condemned along with the Zhangs was the poet-official Fan Chengda

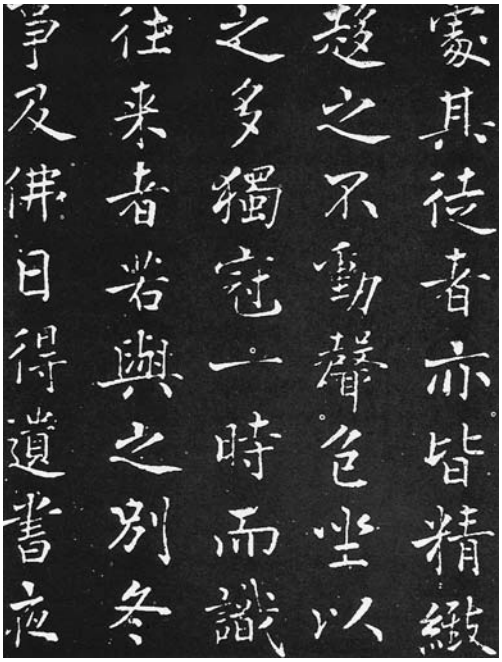




Figure 3.4 (above) Zhang Xiaoxiang, *Epitaph for Meditation Master Hongzhi,* detail. Southern Song dynasty, 1158. Ink rubbing. Reproduced from Huang Peiyu, *Zhang Xiaoxiang yanjiu* (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1993), pl. 1.
Figure 3.5 (above, right) Chu Suiliang, *Preface to the Buddhist Canon,* detail. Tang dynasty, 653. Ink rubbing. Tokyo National Museum. Reproduced from *Chinese Calligraphy: A History of the Art of Calligraphy,* ed. Nakata Yajiro, trans. Jeffrey Hunter (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1983), pl. 38.

(1126–1293), who is best remembered as a calligrapher for an engraving of a scroll of poems he wrote for Meditation Master Fozhao (1121–1203) while visiting him at the Ayuwang Monastery south of modern-day Ningbo in 1181 (fig. 3.7).[17] In this work, he follows the coarse brushstrokes and awkwardly exaggerated gestures of Mi Fu's large running script, as seen in such well-known works by Mi Fu as his *Hongxian Poem Scroll* and *Sailing on the Wu River*.[18] While attractive in its rough edges and bold gestures, Fan's writing is quite unclassical, even though it is related to the writing of Mi Fu. Mi Fu was an ardent student of the style of Wang Xizhi, the basis of

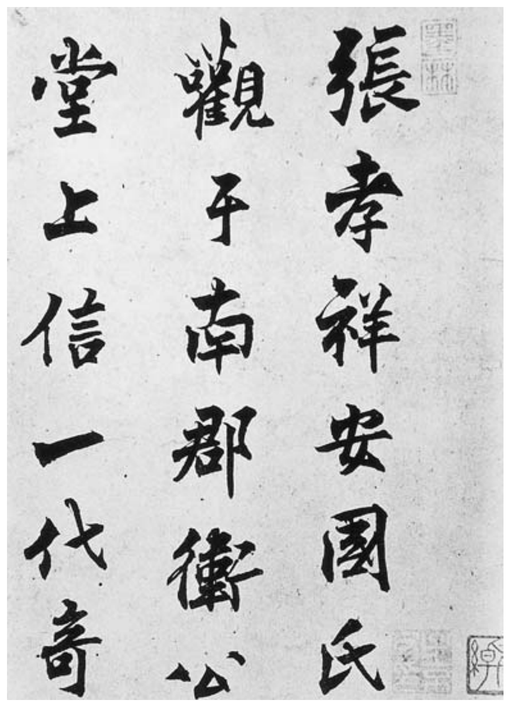


Figure 3.6 Zhang Xiaoxiang, *Colophon* to Huang Tingjian, *Poem on the Shrine to the Spirit of Ma Fubo,* detail. Ink on paper. Private collection, Japan. Reproduced from *Shoseki meihin sōkan* (Tokyo: Nigensha, 1958–1981), 23:53.

the classical tradition, but Fan did not follow Mi's classical manner, as seen in his small running script; instead he imitated the more expressionistic mode of Mi's large running-script poem scrolls.

In short, several factors about these calligraphers could have offended the Confucian sensibilities of Zheng Shao. A religious factor was their involvement with Buddhists. A political factor was their having served under the discredited Southern Song. An artistic factor was that Fan Chengda and Zhang Xiaoxiang imitated Mi Fu and Yan Zhenqing, respectively, meaning that they did not found their styles on direct study of the classical style of Wang Xizhi. This tradition emphasizes a smooth, modulated, graceful line and character compositions that fan out to the right. Indeed, it is commonly noted that most calligraphers of the late Southern Song did not return to a classical source for their inspiration, but based themselves on masters of the Tang and Northern Song dynasties. Using such comparatively recent models went out of fashion in the early fourteenth century, when the influential artist and official Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322) led a revival of the classical Wang style in calligraphy (fig. 3.8). If Zheng Shao subscribed to the visual principles of smooth brushwork and dynamic compositional balance of this classical revival, then his condemnation of Zhang Jizhi and the others on stylistic grounds for participating in the decadent aesthetic horizon of the Southern Song seems an honest opinion. If to him "having method" meant possessing the stylistic attributes of the classical tradition, then, indeed the comparatively modern styles of Wu Yue, Zhang Xiaoxiang, and Fan Chengda have no method. I wonder, however, if Zheng Shao was not using arguments about style as a code for a Confucian standard of criticism.



Figure 3.7 Fan Chengda, *Memorial Poem for Meditation Master Fozhao,* detail. Southern Song dynasty, 1181. Ink rubbing. Collection of Imperial Household Agency, Tokyo. Reproduced from *Chinese Calligraphy,* pl. 59.

The standard was first expressed by Ouyang Xiu (1007–1072) and his circle of Confucian reformers in the eleventh century. They held that only the handwriting of men of superior Confucian character is acceptable as a model. Looking at Zheng Shao's text as a whole, we discover that the Song-dynasty calligraphers he most admired were Cai Xiang, who was Ouyang Xiu's close friend and political ally; Su Shi (1037–1101) and Huang Tingjian, who were followers of Cai and Ouyang; and the Confucian philosophers Cheng Hao (1032–1085) and Zhu Xi (1130–1200).[19] The other calligraphers he reviled were those notorious "traitors" of the Northern Song, the brothers Cai Bian (1058–1117) and Cai Jing (1046–1126).[20] This assessment clearly represents a Confucian standard of judgment based on character, since most connoisseurs would agree that Cai Jing wrote a better hand than either Cheng Hao or Zhu Xi.

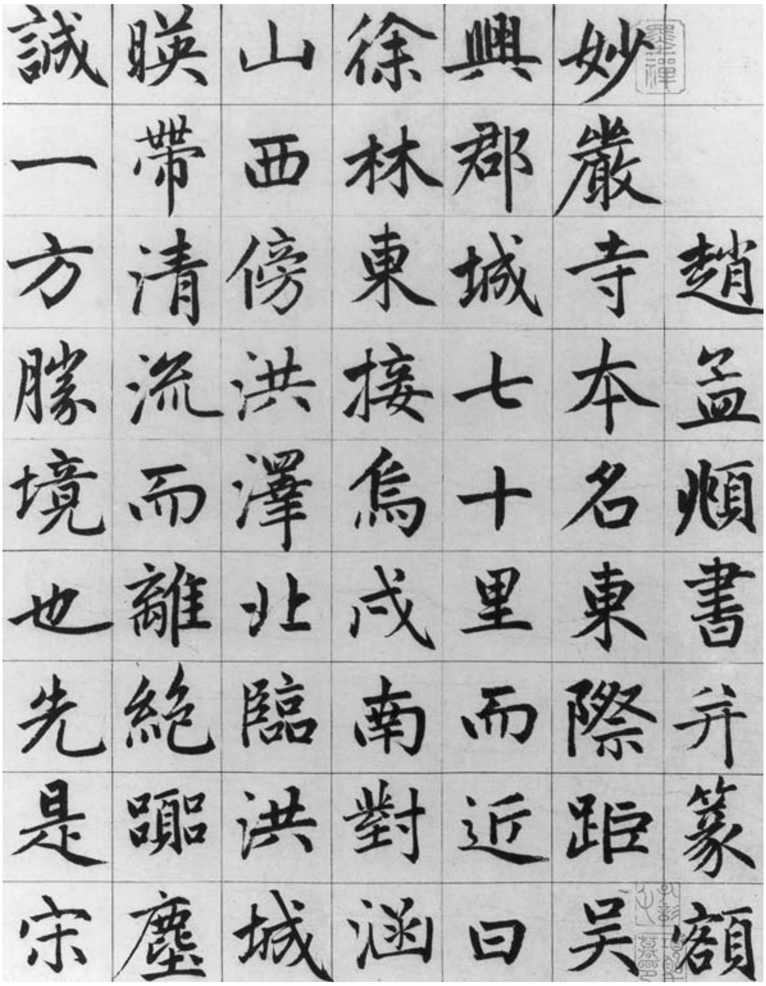


Figure 3.8 Zhao Mengfu, *Record of the Miaoyan Monastery,* detail. Yuan dynasty, c. 1309–1310. Ink on paper. The Art Museum, Princeton University. John B. Elliott Collection.

Yuan Jue (1266–1327), another prominent fourteenth-century Confucian scholar-official and critic, may have been the source for Zheng Shao's charge that "the ruin of calligraphy began with Zhang [Jizhi]."[21] In 1314, Yuan Jue published a gazetteer of Ningbo, Zhang Jizhi's hometown, in which he wrote, "When he was young, Zhang Jizhi studied the calligraphy of his uncle Xiaoxiang, but late in life [his style] became increasingly crazy and mad, which is why his writing is no longer popular."[22] Yuan Jue's statement prompts two questions: Why was the condemnation of Zhang's style so severe? Why did Yuan use the terms "crazy" *(dian)* and "mad" *(kuang)?* We can easily imagine how the angular and ragged writing of Zhang's large regular script would have been an offense against the early-fourteenth-century neo-classicism exemplified by Zhao Mengfu's work and have been seen as just one more instance of calculatedly unorthodox brushwork in the Southern Song. However, Zheng Shao's hero Zhu Xi also engaged in this kind of bravura calligraphic performance occasionally, as may be seen in his large-character transcription of one of the ten commentaries to the *Book of Changes.*[23] Why was Zhang Jizhi criticized for this kind of writing and Zhu Xi not?

Yuan Jue may have called Zhang Jizhi's style "crazy" and "mad" simply to record his opinion that Zhang's style was so eccentric and individual that it could not be used as a standard

 model. But we should note that the terms he used to condemn Zhang Jizhi's style served as the nicknames of the two Tang-dynasty progenitors of "mad cursive" script.[24] Zhang Xu (675–759) was called "Crazy" Zhang, and Huaisu (ca. 735–ca. 800) was known as the "Mad Monk." "Mad cursive" was named after the "Mad Monk," and many of the other famous practitioners of "mad cursive" were also monks of the mid- and late-Tang dynasty, such as Gaoxian (fl. ca. 847–859), Bianguang (d. ca. 930–933), Yaqi (fl. ca. 898–900), Menggui (fl. ninth c.), Yanxiu (fl. ninth c.), and Guanxiu (832–912).[25] As these terms are historically associated with monk-calligraphers, to declare an artist's work "crazy," "mad," and "lacking method" may be a way to marginalize him for participating in a stylistic tradition with Buddhist associations.

The charge of lacking method was also leveled in Yuan times at the painting style of the Chan monk Muqi, who lived in Hangzhou during the late Southern Song period. Muqi and Zhang Jizhi were exact contemporaries and may have been friends; Zhang is known to have associated with the Chan monk Daocan (d. 1271), who was a friend of Muqi (active mid-thirteenth c.).[26] The early-fourteenth-century critic Tang Hou condemned Muqi's style, saying, "In recent times, the monk Muqi produced some casual paintings, which were coarse and ugly and without ancient method."[27] Later in the century, the critic Xia Wenyan repeated this sentiment, saying, "Muqi's paintings are random jottings, in which he dabs on the ink to create an abbreviated conception. . . . [His works] are 'coarse and ugly and without ancient method,' truly not elegant art objects."[28]

Were these critics prejudiced against the art of Buddhist monks as a result of a Confucian perspective on art, or were they offering a connoisseur's unbiased assessment of quality? Tang Hou was the head of a private Confucian academy who refused service under the Mongols as a Confucian instructor. In his writings, however, he maintained no sympathy for didactic subject matter in art, but expressed strong interest in standards of technical ability and aesthetic expression. The rough brushwork and abbreviation of Zhang Jizhi's calligraphy or Muqi's painting may have a strong appeal to Zen adherents in the East or those who appreciate abstract expressionism in the West, but from the standpoint of a fourteenth-century Chinese critic who took the classical tradition as the standard, the art of Buddhist monks would seem crude and untutored. These Buddhist artists may have rejected the classical repertoire of brushstrokes in the interest of self-expression, or they may have engaged in calligraphy or painting as a religious exercise designed to lose consciousness of the self and gain enlightenment, in which case the beauty of the object produced was of little importance compared to the invisible effect of the process on the soul. No matter their motive, however, the aesthetic response to their art by unsympathetic non-Buddhist viewers would be uncomprehending and negative.

The fourteenth-century critics' claim that Zhang Jizhi lacked affiliation with the classical tradition was dealt with by two seventeenth-century critics in colophons on Zhang Jizhi's transcription of the Diamond Sutra of 1246. This transcription, now in the John B. Elliott Collection in the Art Museum at Princeton, was dedicated to the generation of posthumous karmic merit for his deceased father (see fig. 3.2).[29] In his colophon dated to 1620, the scholar-official and Buddhist layman Bi Xizhi relates how he had this transcription copied and engraved in stone so that ink rubbings could be made of it. This was a pious Buddhist act intended to disseminate multiple copies of the sutra. At the same time, engraving one's calligraphy collection for public edification was a common scholarly practice in the Ming. Bi Xizhi's colophon opens with praise for the efficacy of the Diamond Sutra and then goes on

to discuss Zhang Jizhi's calligraphic style. In contrast to the fourteenth-century critics who saw no connection between Zhang and the classical tradition, Bi Xizhi easily identified classical elements in Zhang Jizhi's style: "Connoisseurs say the composition of his characters resembles Chu Suiliang's, while the movements and turns of the brush are like those of Mi Fu."[30]

Let us do a brief comparison to see if the transcription itself offers any proof that Zhang actually studied these two masters of the classical tradition. Bi Xizhi has called attention to the composition of Chu Suiliang's characters, which are noted for their loose structure and slender strokes. The association he makes with Zhang Jizhi's characters is in the lack of contact between the strokes in a given character. Compare for example the character *wen* in Chu Suiliang's *Preface to the Buddhist Canon* (see fig. 3.5, third column, second character) and in Zhang Jizhi's Diamond Sutra (see fig. 3.2, second column, fourth character). There is a similar quality of disconnectedness in the strokes, but they also reveal that Zhang did not employ the standard character composition of the classical tradition to which Chu Suiliang belonged, a composition described as "left tight, right loose," meaning that the character form fans out to the right. Zhang's characters are either even across the bottom, as in this character *wen,* or they are the opposite of the classical model, with the character actually larger on the left side. I would argue that this difference shows that the influence of Chu Suiliang (and of Mi Fu) was secondhand. As noted above, Zhang Jizhi's uncle Zhang Xiaoxiang could write in a Chu Suiliang manner, as in his *Epitaph for Meditation Master Hongzhi* (see fig. 3.4), and in a Mi Fu manner, common in the Southern Song, as in his colophon to Huang Tingjian's poems (see fig. 3.6). From what we know of Zhang Jizhi's early education, it was highly likely that, as a child, he was taught his uncle's style.[31] So, although Bi Xizhi's references to Chu Suiliang and Mi Fu are not wrong, they are not exactly right either, since they imply a direct study of these masters that we have no indication took place. This implication obscures a historical reality of Southern Song calligraphy: direct study of the classical masters had by then declined.

Why did Bi Xizhi make these tenuous connections between Zhang Jizhi's style and those of Chu Suiliang and Mi Fu? Presumably he was attempting to affiliate Zhang Jizhi directly with the high-status classical tradition, removing him from the mass of Southern Song calligraphers who learned from sources that were seen as too contemporary. From the Ming dynasty onward, establishing an artist as part of the orthodox lineage became a fundamental purpose in appreciative colophons. The obsession with lineages may be traced back to Tang-dynasty ideas about succession, within both Confucianism and Chan Buddhism.[32] This nearly automatic search for earlier masters with which to identify an artist carries the danger of ignoring possible contemporary or low-status influences and thereby falsifying the historical record. Why did Bi Xizhi not mention the style of Zhang Xiaoxiang as an influence? Why not point out similarities to other Southern Song artists? Why not explore the relationship between Zhang's sutra manner and anonymous sutras from the Song dynasty or earlier, which surely a man as pious and well connected as Bi Xizhi had seen? The reason is that Bi Xizhi had the typical scholarly propensity to ignore contemporary influences in favor of ancient models and to look down on the low-status writing of artisan-class sutra scribes.

The colophon following Bi Xizhi's on the Elliott Collection sutra was written by the Ming artist and arbiter of taste Dong Qichang (1555–1636), also in 1620. Dong Qichang's explanation for Zhang Jizhi's style differs from the typical affiliation model: "Looking at how he moves the brush and the composition of his characters, I see that he follows no earlier man.

Each [character] is independently created. This is what a Chan person would call 'the outflowing of the innermost self extending out to engulf the universe.' "[33] Dong Qichang escaped the trap of compulsory affiliation by employing Chan terminology to describe Zhang's creativity as purely self-generated. This terminology is typical of Dong Qichang's art criticism, which is filled with Chan references and analogies.[34] It is a celebration of the very idea of "no method" that was hurled as an accusation by the Yuan-dynasty Confucian critics. The notion of a spontaneously generated calligraphic style may have been one with which Zhang Jizhi himself would have agreed, yet it is difficult to find his style entirely original because the debt to his uncle is so clear. With all due respect to Dong Qichang's religious convictions and to the power of human creativity, even in preferring originality to a traditional affiliation scheme, Dong Qichang also ignored any possible influence from Zhang's immediate milieu, and in so doing, also unwittingly perpetuated the invisibility of sutra scribes and contemporary models in the critical and historical record. Ultimately, despite the differences in their opinions, Dong Qichang and Bi Xizhi were after the same traditional goal: to ascribe Zhang Jizhi's creativity to a high-status source. For Bi Xizhi, that source was the classical tradition; for Dong Qichang, it was the unbridled Chan self.

A very different type of critical response to a work by Zhang Jizhi was expressed by Buddhist monks who wrote colophons for a transcription of the Diamond Sutra that Zhang made for his deceased wife in 1248.[35] This album, now in the Beijing Palace Museum, has nine colophons ranging in date from 1316 to 1402, the first eight written by monks from monasteries around Suzhou, Hangzhou, and Ningbo.[36] According to these colophons, the keeper of the sutra storage, a monk called Dongshan, had obtained this Diamond Sutra for the sutra repository of the Huideng Monastery in Suzhou, where it was held as a great treasure. The dates in the colophons indicate that the sutra was retrieved from storage for appreciation on important religious occasions, such as the anniversary of the Buddha's enlightenment or of his birth. These Buddhist monks were mostly unexceptional as calligraphers, and, not surprisingly, their writings reveal a different set of concerns from those expressed by the scholar-officials, concerns that stem primarily from the content of the text.

For instance, the first colophon, written in 1316 by a Hangzhou monk named Yuanxi, quotes the line from chapter 21 of the Diamond Sutra in which Buddha says to his disciple Subhuti, "If anyone says that the Tathagata sets forth a teaching, he really slanders Buddha and is unable to explain what I teach."[37] The quote in the colophon ends there, but in the sutra, Buddha goes on to say, "As to any truth-declaring system, truth is undeclarable; so 'an enunciation of truth' is just the name given to it." This is one of the multitudinous instances in the sutra where Buddha points out that names and appearances are not reality. The point of chapter 21 in particular is that "words cannot express truth; that which words express is not truth."

As a further contradiction, however, the writing out of sutras is explicitly encouraged by the sutras themselves, the Diamond Sutra included. In the last chapter of this scripture, Buddha tells Subhuti: "Someone might fill innumerable worlds with the seven treasures and give all away in gifts of alms, but if any good man or any good woman awakens the thought of enlightenment and takes even only four lines from this discourse, reciting, using, receiving, retaining, and spreading them abroad and explaining them for the benefit of others, it will be far more meritorious."[38] Here the tension arises, for what the monk has in his hands, upon which he is to write a colophon, is a piece of paper with words on it. These words tell him

that words cannot express truth at the same moment that they encourage their own propagation as the truth.

Several of the monks' colophons play similarly with notions of the unreality of the object in their hands. The author of the second colophon, a monk Xingduan, writing in 1317, again begins with the quotation "If anyone says that the Tathagata sets forth a teaching, he really slanders Buddha," and then goes on to say, "From this one might say that although Subhuti asked about the truth, the World-Honored One did not teach the truth, nor did Zhang Jizhi write out the truth, nor did the monks of the past treasure the truth. None of them did. But if they did not, then how could they have produced this diamond of infinite wonderful meaning?"[39]

The succeeding colophons quote Xingduan's argument and continue to toy with the contradiction between the message of the sutra and the fact of its physical existence. A monk from Suzhou named Congding (fifth colophon, dated to 1346) wrote:

> In the past, a man would gesture with a brush in his hand, practicing a method called "writing the scriptures in the air." After the man departed, that spot would be naturally solemn and pure, and rain could not moisten it. Zhang Jizhi was actually a famous official of the late-Song dynasty who was also a true believer in Buddhism as the vehicle [of salvation]. In these thirty-two chapters of his Diamond Sutra transcription, every character, every stroke is grave and serious, strong and beautiful. This is not, however, a skill devoted to calming the mind. Why is it like this? This is very far from the method of "writing the scriptures in the air." Yet in this sutra is a four-character *gatha:* "free from the idea of an ego entity, free from the idea of a personality, free from the idea of a being, free from the idea of a separated individuality."[40] It is a pity no brush tip has pointed this out. He who holds this sutra should himself write out this "eye." But if we cast off doubt and see through it, then what the World-Honored One has taught and what Zhang Jizhi has written both constitute remnants of the Dharma.[41]

The eighth colophon was written in 1375 by the celebrated poet Laifu, a monk of the Lingyin Monastery in Hangzhou. He too takes up this issue concerning the writing out of sutras, that is, how words may be used to express what cannot be expressed in words and how a physically real object can teach that reality is an illusion:

> The sutras all praise the writing down of the merits of the great vehicle, even though they are not something that words and thoughts can illustrate. Still it is the case that people want to circulate the treasury of the Dharma, to benefit the world and expand it limitlessly. . . . What is the explanation for this? Though the Tathagata's marvelous Dharma is everywhere in all places, forever divorced from mere names and appearances and all of creation, it is only preserved in the mind from reading it. To get a written record of it, you may borrow paper, ink, words, and letters to illustrate it, and then you will have this thing to contemplate. However, we should understand that rice plants, hemp stalks, bamboo, and reeds are nothing if not huge brushes; rivers, lakes, springs, and ponds are nothing if

> not vast [reservoirs of] ink. The constellations suspended in the heavens and the landscapes of the earth are nothing but the marvelous sutras. The ordinary conduct of our lives, our usual behavior, our manner and deportment, are nothing but the writing out [of the sutras]. This is what we refer to as writing by not writing, which is called true writing; and teaching by not teaching, which is called true teaching. What have they to do with the brush and the tongue?
>
> The layman Zhang Jizhi wrote out this scroll of the *Diamond Sutra* for his late wife, as a way to increase her fortune in the next world. It has circulated now for more than a hundred years. Though the world has changed, the scroll is as new. How could it not be the result of the power of the original vow [to seek enlightenment], but merely possess the phenomenal appearance of *devas, nagas,* ghosts, and demons? Sutra-keeper Dongshan has taken this out of storage in order to show it to me. He asked me to write a colophon following the text. Therefore, I have summarized the merits and virtues of writing out sutras. So it is that this thing we read, chant, keep, and hold will open our diamond eye and confer on us [the understanding that] all appearances are false appearances. As the Tathagata is revealed, we know that Layman Zhang Jizhi was able with the tip of his brush to release the great glory of Buddha and to write of his works. This is why Sutra-keeper Dongshan has treasured and circulated it.[42]

Although the monks preserved this sutra by a famous calligrapher, retrieved it for viewing on important occasions, and wrote colophons on it, they were unwilling to participate in the scholars' game of aesthetic appreciation. Their responses largely relate to the content of the sutra, while the beauty of the calligraphy seems only to heighten the tension created by words teaching that words are illusion. In the end, the monks seem to have succeeded in the pious struggle against appreciating this sutra transcription as a source of aesthetic gratification. That their purposes for art were seen as radically different from Confucian purposes is witnessed by the author of the last colophon on the Beijing album, a local layman named Xie Ju, writing in 1402:

> When the Huideng Monastery monk Dongshan was the keeper of the sutra storage, he obtained and kept [this sutra] as a treasure. It has been years since Dongshan passed away. His followers have also been able to treasure what their master treasured, and I was able to view it with them. I sigh that this sutra the Buddhists treasure is also treasured by Confucianists as calligraphy by a sage worthy. Certainly it should be treasured. Jizhi was famous in the Song dynasty for his calligraphy, and we Confucianists treasure his ink traces. Dongshan also treasured it, and his followers love it and hand it down. Thus a thing that is Buddhist yet admired by we Confucianists may be revered indeed![43]

In sum, many attitudes toward Buddhism and art are found in the reception of Zhang Jizhi's calligraphy and sutra transcriptions, as seen in this selection of responses from the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. Confucian critics of the Yuan dynasty rejected Zhang's style for "craziness" and "lack of method." Such terms might have been used simply to note a lack of adherence to the classical tradition, but as they were associated with earlier Buddhist

calligraphers, they may have been used to tie Zhang Jizhi to marginalized Buddhist styles in calligraphy and painting. Zhang Jizhi may have been disparaged simply because the late Southern Song was seen as a decadent period. Buddhist monks, writing on one of Zhang Jizhi's Diamond Sutra transcriptions during this same period, were occupied with finding a religious justification for the place of a work of art in their faith. Their lay friend, Xie Ju, seemed to counter their disparagement of its worth by noting that it was valued equally, though differently, by Confucianists. In the seventeenth century, two lay Buddhist scholar-officials sought to rehabilitate Zhang Jizhi's calligraphy by claiming acceptable sources for his style. In his colophon on a Diamond Sutra transcription, Bi Xizhi affiliated Zhang Jizhi with what contemporary connoisseurs considered the most elegant and elite legacy in calligraphy: the classical tradition of Wang Xizhi. In a concurrent colophon, Dong Qichang located Zhang Jizhi's creative source within the Chan concept of an original genius that merges with the universe, thereby making of the critical life of Zhang Jizhi's Diamond Sutra a perfect Chan circle of Chan artist, Chan text, and Chan reader.

Notes

1. See Lothar Ledderose, *Mi Fu and the Classical Tradition of Chinese Calligraphy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979); and Amy McNair, *The Upright Brush: Yan Zhenqing's Calligraphy and Song Literati Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998).
2. A portion of this essay, which was first presented as a paper for the symposium held in conjunction with the "Latter Days of the Law" exhibition at the Spencer Museum of Art in 1994, was published in *The Embodied Image: Chinese Calligraphy from the John B. Elliott Collection,* ed. Robert E. Harrist, Jr., and Wen C. Fong (Princeton, N.J.: The Art Museum, Princeton University, in association with Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 118, 234–236, and appears here with the permission of The Art Museum, Princeton University.
3. See Fu Shen, "Zhang Jizhi he ta de zhong kai" [Chang Chi-chih (1186–1266): The Last Great Calligrapher of the Sung and His "Medium-Regular Script"], *Gugong jikan* 10, 4 (1976): 43–65 (English abstract, 21–39). Zhang gave his Diamond Sutra transcription of 1253 (now in the Chishaku-in) to Wuzhun Shifan's disciple Xiyan Liaohui (1198–1262) in 1254 (52).
4. See Zhang's biography in *Songshi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 445:13145.
5. Reproduced in Jan Fontein and Money L. Hickman, *Zen Painting and Calligraphy* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1970), cat. no. 9.
6. The Liaoning scroll is reproduced in Song Jin Yuan shufa, pt. 4 of Shufa zhuanke bian, Zhongguo meishu quanji (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1986), pl. 73. The others are reproduced in *Shodo zenshu,* 26 vols., 3d ed. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1966–1969), vol. 16, pl. 71–74.
7. Reproduced in *Shodō zenshū,* vol. 16, pl. 75–80. See also Shui Laiyou, "Zhang Jizhi de shufa yishu," *Shufa yanjiu,* no. 3 (1991): 77–85.
8. See Marilyn Wong-Gleysteen, "Calligraphy and Painting: Some Sung and Post-Sung Parallels in North and South—A Reassessment of the Chiang-nan Tradition," in *Words and Images: Chinese Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting,* ed. Alfreda Murck and Wen C. Fong (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991), 156–160.
9. Quoted from his *Molin kuaishi,* in *Peiwenzhai shuhuapu,* ed. Wang Yuanqi (rpt. Beijing: Beijingshi Zhongguo shudian, 1984), 78:17a.
10. Zheng Shao, *Yanji,* commentary by Liu Youding (fl. ca. 1324–1328), in *Lidai shufa lunwenxuan,* ed. Huang Jian, 2 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1979), 1:460.
11. "Calligraphy and Painting," 156.
12. For an example, see *Shodō zenshū,* vol. 16, pl. 33–34. See also Nakata Yūjirō, *Chūgoku shoron shu* (Tokyo: Nigensha, 1970), 277–283.
13. *Shodō zenshū,* vol. 16, 167.

14. See ibid., 171. When I visited Tiantong Monastery in 1994, I was told the stele was at the site of the "old" Tiantong Monastery, some distance away.
15. See Huang Peiyu, *Zhang Xiaoxiang yanjiu* (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1993), 238–243.
16. See Chu Hui-liang, "Imperial Calligraphy of the Southern Sung," in *Words and Images,* 305–310.
17. See Xu Runzhi, "Nan Song jiechu shiren shufajia Fan Chengda," *Shufa yanjiu,* no. 5 (1993): 86–87.
18. Reproduced in Nakata Yujiro, "Calligraphic Style and Poetry Handscrolls: On Mi Fu's *Sailing on the Wu River,*" in *Words and Images,* figs. 23 and 25.
19. *Yanji,* in *Lidai shufa lunwenxuan,* 1:409, 459, 461, 462.
20. Ibid., 1:460.
21. Yuan Jue, *Qingrong jushi ji, Sibu congkan* ed. (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1920–1922), 33/14 *xia.*
22. *Yanyou Siming zhi,* quoted in Huang, *Zhang Xiaoxiang yanjiu,* 264.
23. Details reproduced in Wong-Gleysteen, "Calligraphy and Painting," fig. 67; and idem, *The Graphic Ballet of the Writer's Brush—Chinese Calligraphy* (Taibei: National Museum of History, 1989), 54.
24. "Mad cursive" is characterized by radically simplified (sometimes illegible) character forms that often vary extremely in size and tend to be linked in a continuous movement. Its desired aesthetic effect is one of eccentricity and expressiveness.
25. Wang Gang, "Kuang Chan feng zhong de biantaimei," *Shufa yanjiu,* no. 1 (1988): 12. So strong is the traditional association between Tang monks and "mad cursive" that a recent article had to argue for the participation of scholar-officials: Wang Yuanjun, "Tangdai 'kuang shi shufa' chu tan" [Preliminary examination of "mad scholar-official calligraphy" in the Tang dynasty], *Shufa yanjiu,* no. 1 (1994): 46–59.
26. Fontein and Hickman, *Zen Painting and Calligraphy,* 26.
27. Tang Hou, *Huajian* (1389), *Meishu congshu* ed., comp. Huang Binhong and Deng Shi (Shanghai: Guoguang she, 1911–1936; rev. ed., 1947; rpt., Taibei: Yiwen, 1963, 1975), 17a.
28. Xia Wenyan, *Tuhui baojian* (rpt. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991), 4:11.
29. See Shen C. Y. Fu et al., *Traces of the Brush* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977), fig. 11a and pp. 138, 144, and 248–249.
30. Colophon transcribed in Nakata Yūjirō and Fu Shen, *Ōbei shūzō Chūgoku hōsho meisekishū (Masterpieces of Chinese Calligraphy in American and European Collections),* 6 vols. (Tokyo: Chūōkōron-sha, 1981–1983), 2:149.
31. See Huang, *Zhang Xiaoxiang yanjiu,* 263.
32. See John Jorgensen, "The 'Imperial' Lineage of Ch'an Buddhism: The Role of Confucian Ritual and Ancestor Worship in Ch'an's Search for Legitimation in the Mid-T'ang Dynasty," *Papers on Far Eastern History,* no. 35 (March 1987): 89–133.
33. *Chinese Calligraphy: A History of the Art of China,* ed. Nakata Yūjirō, trans. Jeffrey Hunter (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1983), 194. Colophon transcribed in Nakata and Fu, *Ōbei shūzō Chūgoku hōsho meisekishū,* 2:149.
34. See Xue Yongnian, "Declining the Morning Blossom and Inspiring the Evening Bud: The Theory and Practice of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's Calligraphy," in *Proceedings of the Tung Ch'i-ch'ang International Symposium* (Kansas City, Mo.: Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 1991).
35. A section is reproduced in Tseng Yuho, *A History of Chinese Calligraphy* (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1993), fig. 7.83. Another transcription of the Diamond Sutra, which Zhang dedicated to his late mother in 1253, is in the Chishaku-in, Kyoto (reproduced in *Chinese Calligraphy,* pl. 61).
36. Transcribed in Xu Bangda, *Gu shuhua guoyan yaolu: Jin, Sui, Tang, Wudai, Song shufa* (Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 1987), 554–555.
37. *The Diamond Sutra and the Sutra of Hui-neng,* trans. A. F. Price and Wong Mou-lam (Boston: Shambhala, 1990), 42.
38. Ibid., 53.
39. Xu Bangda, *Gu shuhua guoyan yaolu,* 554.
40. Price and Wong, *Diamond Sutra,* 32.
41. Xu Bangda, *Gu shuhua guoyan yaolu,* 554.
42. Ibid., 555.
43. Ibid.

4

Through the Empty Gate: The Poetry of Buddhist Nuns in Late Imperial China

Beata Grant

IN THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, a lay Buddhist scholar-official from Jiaxing (in present-day Zhejiang province) by the name of Gao Yiyong (*jinshi,* 1613) wondered about the seeming absence of women in the written biographical and historical accounts of Buddhist monastic figures:

> Those who abandoned worldly glory and went in search of tranquility, seeking to transcend this dusty world and refusing to be entrapped by it, were for the most part all virile and heroic knights with wills of iron. Thus they were able to embark on this path and penetrate to the origin and become the famous religious figures of the ages. When it comes to the denizens of perfumed inner chambers and embroidered fans, they are as a rule gentle and submissive, weak and passive. If one looks in the various books of the *Records of the Lamp* for accounts of women who have taken refuge, one will find very few.[1]

As Miriam Levering points out, the first of the great genealogical histories, the *Jingde chuandeng lu* (Jingde period records of the lamp), completed in 1004, contained only one biographical record of a woman, Moshan Liaoran, a contemporary of Linji Yixuan (d. 866)—this despite the fact that a 1021 census reported 61,240 nuns. Subsequent Song-dynasty histories included a few more, including two women who for the first time were officially recognized in these imperial-commissioned histories as Chan masters.[2] In later compendiums there are more biographical references to Buddhist nuns—but still a very small percentage of the many thousands of Ming and Qing women living in hundreds of convents and hermitages large and small. It is not surprising, therefore, that Gao Yiyong should have had difficulty finding any textual traces of these women. Fortunately for us, however, Gao and other Buddhist literati-officials like him made an effort to track down and preserve the writings of at least a few of the more eminent Buddhist nuns of his time. It is for this reason that the privately sponsored edition of the Buddhist canon and other supplementary texts, begun on Mount Wutai in 1589 but completed at Lengyan Monastery in Jiaxing in 1676, contains a

 number of "discourse records" *(yulu)* compiled by the disciples of female Chan masters of this period. Thanks to these records, together with literary works and biographical accounts in other scattered sources, we can affirm that in the Ming-Qing period, as in the Song, there were a significant number of women who were distinguished for their spiritual attainments, their leadership qualities, and last, but not least, their literary and artistic talents.

The Ming-Qing period was in many ways even a more hostile environment for Buddhist nuns than previous periods. The momentous socioeconomic changes that began in the late Ming and continued through the Qing period resulted in the blurring of geographic, class, and gender boundaries; the traditional male elite responded ambivalently, especially when it came to the position of women.[3] On the one hand, footbinding, concubinage, female infanticide, and the infamous widow chastity cult (which resulted in the suicide of thousands of women) were widespread, all much encouraged by many male literati scholars. On the other hand, there were men such as Zhang Xuecheng (1738–1801) and Chen Hongmou (1696–1771) who argued for the education and literacy of women. And in fact, during this period there were more women reading, writing, and publishing—with the ready support of fathers, sons, and husbands—than anywhere else in the world. The result of this particular combination of oppression and opportunity was not, as one might expect, a revolution on the part of women. Rather, as recent studies of women's writings from this period have shown, it was less a story of subversion and transgression (although there was occasionally that) and more one of negotiation between self-expression and self-effacement.

This ambivalence extended to the religious world as well. Confucian literati were generally opposed to anyone's abandoning his or her familial and filial duties to enter the monastery. However, their ire was more often than not directed toward women who in abandoning the home were in a sense divesting themselves of that with which they were almost entirely identified. These literati did realize that at times women had no choice in the matter; an eighteenth-century official writes, "Buddhist monks and nuns are heretics among the people, yet never in history have they been [completely] abolished. For it is by this means that the widower and the widow, the childless and the orphan, have been able to be rescued from certain death."[4] However, it is only the nuns who, along with other socially marginal women such as teachers, diviners, go-betweens, and peddlers, are commonly referred to in Ming-Qing literature as "hags." The popular literature of the period is full of descriptions of the illicit and immoral behavior of these women, and dire warnings against their pernicious influence sounded, as Susan Mann notes, "throughout the lexicon of [Qing] writings on the domestic realm."[5] And as Cai Hongsheng's recent study of Buddhist nuns in Chinese history fully demonstrates, there is an abundance of literary and historical sources illustrating female monastic depravity and degradation at worst, pitiful delusion and victimization at best.[6]

Nor were male literati more favorably disposed toward Buddhism any less ambivalent about Buddhist nuns. Thus, the Buddhist layman Peng Shaosheng (1740–1796), in his unprecedented *Biographies of Pious Women,* offers as spiritual role models women who during their lifetimes conformed utterly to proper Confucian womanly behavior, including serving their husbands and in-laws and bearing children, but at the moment of death, were miraculously able to detach themselves from these domestic concerns and single-mindedly focus on obtaining birth in the Pure Land.[7] In short, many were reluctant to acknowledge that the religious life offered more to women than merely physical or economic refuge, and the male Buddhist literati were reluctant to acknowledge that, for many women, the religious life might represent

a serious alternative rather than merely a supplement to domestic life. What is missing from both these perspectives, of course, is that of religious women themselves.

Identifying what these perspectives might have been is not easy given the scarcity of primary materials related to Buddhist nuns. However, a significant number of these eighteenth-century women were from educated families, and many wrote poetry, some of which fortunately remains extant today. These poems, together with scattered fragments of biographical and anecdotal information, are really all we have to go by. Although they cannot provide as full a picture of these nun's lives as we might wish, they do provide us with a tantalizing glimpse into the inner worlds of these religious women. They serve as a reminder that we can no longer speak of a *homo religiosus* defined exclusively in terms of the experiences of men. They also remind us that it will not do to try to create an equivalent feminized version of this *homo religiosus*: we must realize that women's experience often differed not only from that of men, but from that of other women as well.

This essay represents an initial attempt to see what might be gleaned from a close reading of selected writings—mostly, although by no means exclusively, poetic—of some of the more eminent Buddhist nuns of the Ming-Qing period. For some of these women, we have a large number of extant poems; for others, only a few. Many of the poems written by these women, as is true of those written by their male counterparts as well, are unremarkable in the sense that they are conventionally occasional; others lack the contextualization needed to attempt a meaningful interpretation. For the purposes of this particular study, I have chosen to translate poems that tell us something about the religious life of their authors and in so doing, provide us with a glimpse, albeit shadowy, of the varieties of women's religious experience during the late-imperial period.

Needless to say, reconstructing women's religious experience based on literary materials is a project subject to many familiar difficulties and dangers. In traditional China, poetry—and religious poetry in particular—was to a great extent both dictated and shaped by convention. Women writers made use of largely male conventions (whether religious or literary) to express thoughts and emotions that were not necessarily central to the male experience. Some clearly struggled to reinscribe these conventions, if only in a very modest way; others simply emulated their male counterparts, counting on their readers to take the author's biographical context into consideration when they read their poems. Another problem is that otherwise useful anthologies, such as the *Supplemental Biographies of Buddhist Nuns (Xu biqiuni zhuan)* by Chenhua, often include poems written by nuns, but without specifying whether these poems were composed before or after their entering the convent.[8] This does not mean that poetry is totally unreliable ground upon which to reconstruct the personal religious experiences of these women. What it does mean is that in reading this poetry, one must be aware of both the literary and historical context in which it was written as well as the literary, religious, and gender conventions to which it adheres.

One of the first things that the pieced-together biographical and poetic sources tell us is that motivations for entering the religious life (when it is possible to identify them) often differed greatly from woman to woman. In general, however, they seem to fall into two general categories. The first (and perhaps the largest) comprises women who appear to have entered the convent as a last resort—whether because of illness, economic hardship, or, as was often the case, the death of husbands or family. The second is made up of women who, again judging from their writings, appear to have entered the religious life in response to an inner

 call or vocation and to have found there a significant measure of emotional, intellectual, and spiritual fulfillment.

Naturally, there is some overlap between the two categories; women who entered the convent for economic reasons, for example, sometimes discovered the religious life to be unexpectedly congenial and conducive to their intellectual and spiritual development. This is reflected in the fact that a significant number of women who became nuns did so as widows. Many of these widows were very young, however, having lost their husbands to unexpected illness or to the vagaries of war; some became widows even before they had become brides. This was particularly true during the chaos of the Ming-Qing transition, when many women lost not only husbands or fiancées, but also often entire families. This early encounter with the finality of death, not to mention the social and economic straits in which it often left women, motivated many to turn to the religious life.

A particularly dramatic example of this is the story of three women associated with the famous Hou family of loyalists from Jiading (Jiangsu province).[9] Shenyi (d. 1722), whose secular name was Xia Meinan (styled Longyin), was the daughter of Xia Yunyi, director of the Bureau of Evaluations during the Ming. She married Hou Xun from Jiading, but was widowed when she was only twenty-one years old. After a year-long mourning period, she was ordained as a nun. About this time, Shenyi's father committed suicide, and her home was completely reduced to rubble. She fled and built a hermitage on the banks of the Caoxi River in Guangdong, where she was joined not long after by the remaining members of both her own and her husband's family. However, Shenyi's father-in-law, Hou Jiceng, was pursued and arrested on charges of treason, upon which his wife drowned herself in the river. Shenyi personally retrieved her body to give her a proper burial. Not long after this, Shenyi was joined in her hermitage by a niece, Yao Weiyu, who took the religious name of Zaisheng. Weiyu had been married to Hou Yan, the son of Hou Dongceng, Shenyi's father-in-law's brother; both father and son died battling the forces of the Qing invaders. Finally, they were joined by Sheng Yunzhen, whose fiancé, Hou Dongceng's third son, Jing, had been executed by the Manchus. She took the religious name of Jingwei.

Having survived the tragedies of war, these three women banded together for comfort and mutual support. Their religious practice appears to have been directed primarily at providing psychological solace until the day when, in the words of Shenyi, "these three hundred and sixty joints will be handed over to the Great Emptiness and there will be no more pain and sorrow."[10]

All three were highly educated young women from prominent families who had already acquired reputations for their skills in painting, calligraphy, and poetry writing, and they continued to use poetry to express their profound sense of loss. The following verse by Zaisheng reflects the combination of nostalgia for the past and yearnings for a sorrow-free future (in the Western Pure Land) that characterizes much of the poetry written by these women.

On the Night of March Fifteenth in the Daren Mountains,
Writing of My Feelings after Having to Say Goodbye
after a Long Conversation

White clouds at heaven's edge hover low like this melancholy:
This fathomless feeling in my heart I blame on the dawn birds.
Misty willows by the river bridge, how small the new moon:

Sporadic bells from an old temple, how cool the dawn breeze.
Shadows of a life's illusions, the flowering branch now old:
Twenty years of a floating life wandering grass-covered roads.
A single reed at river's end is so easily snapped in two.
When you leave for the West, wait and we'll go hand in hand.[11]

There was, however, more to the religious life of these women than simply Pure Land piety. As educated women, they were, like their male counterparts, probably fairly well versed in Chan Buddhist texts as well. In fact, Shenyi, who was considered to be the senior nun at Caoxi, apparently left a number of religious writings, which Jingwei assembled into a "discourse record" after Shenyi's death. Jingwei also wrote Shenyi's official religious biography, which was no doubt appended to the discourse records. Unfortunately, it is no longer extant.

What we do have is a poem by Jingwei dedicated to Master Shengzhuang, who, judging from the reference to the inner chambers in the opening line, was probably female—perhaps it even refers to Shenyi, whom Jingwei regarded as her teacher. And in the last lines, Jingwei alludes to Liu Tiemo, or Iron Mill Liu, the feisty woman disciple of the great Tang master Guishan Lingyou (771–853). Her nickname apparently refers to her ability to crush her opponents in Dharma battle "like an iron millstone grinding wheat into flour."[12] She is featured in several Chan cases (C. *gong'an;* J. *koan*) including case numbers seventeen and twenty-four of the famous Song dynasty *Blue Cliff Records (Biyan lu).* In the latter, she is—uncharacteristically—bested in Dharma battle by Zihu, who, together with his better-known fellow student Zhaozhou (778–897), was a Dharma heir of Meditation Master Nanquan Puyuan (748–834). Such examples of female disciples in the traditional religious compendia are few and far between, and it is interesting and significant that Jingwei should have singled Liu out for inspiration.

To Master Shengzhuang
From these inner chambers you shine forth,
Transcendent and glorious like a distant object.
When the mind is able to be like moon in water
The bones will naturally glow with misty colors.
Blue it grows, the bamboo of True Suchness;
Golden it opens, the blossom of Realized Wisdom.
I will send a message to Liu Tiemo to let her know,
How much I want to understand the tea of Zhaozhou.[13]

Whether women entered a large, established monastery or simply went to live in a small hermitage with two or three other women, they often sought to create new types of family ties to replace those that had been broken. Sometimes, as in the case of Shenyi and her relatives, this new family was based on preexisting ties of kinship. (This was true in the West as well, where female relatives would often enter the same convent or would live together in hermitages built by their families.) These new familial connections were often expressed and maintained by means of poetry. From this poetry we can also tell that these women were aware that they were breaking with one family (whether the traditional Confucian family or the less traditional courtesan "family") and connecting with another. We see this fairly clearly in the

 following poem by a nun named Wanxian about whom, again, we know very little. She was from Changzhou, her secular name was Ms. Shi, and she lost her husband shortly after her marriage. There is loneliness in this poem, but instead of looking back with melancholy and nostalgia, the speaker seems to realize that the red cord (that binds husband and wife) has been definitively cut and that she is no longer subject to the "thrice-following" behind father, husband, and son. Thus, underneath the loneliness there emerges, like the dawn clouds from the dark mountain peak, a suggestion of a different sort of inner freedom, a taste of the "pungent flavor of the Way."

Writing of my Feelings from within the Nunnery
Chan gates shut all day against all traces of [worldly] dust.
In front, groves of fine bamboo, and in back, grow trees of pine.
Now the wild geese have gone, there are few companions left;
But where dawn clouds rise, a brush-stroke of dark mountain peak.
Now I suddenly understand the shallowness of worldly roots.
Now who is there that knows the pungent flavor of the Way.
The red cord that stretches a thousand *li* is now cut in two.
In this sublime setting, to speak of "thrice-following" is pointless.[14]

Other women suffered profound economic insecurity and, in some case, a strong pressure to remarry—this despite the strong social and moral codes against widow remarriage. An example is the nun Miaohui, who as a young widow was sent home to her natal family after her husband's death. Pressured by her own parents to remarry, she wrote a polite but firm manifesto in which she expressed her determination to remain chaste. Her literary eloquence moved her parents to relent, and Miaohui was allowed to remain at home with them. After their deaths, she then entered the Bore (Prajna) Hermitage in Hunan province. Over the next several decades—she was eighty years old when she died—she apparently became a respected teacher and attracted a considerable number of disciples. The following poem provides a glimpse of a woman who had been resolute in her resistance to remarriage and was now determined to overcome the obstacles to inner spiritual enlightenment.

Dawn Meditation in Prajna Hermitage
Night rain washes the mountain cliffs,
    the dawn greens soaked through.
Sitting, I meditate on emptiness
    as fresh breezes fills the temple.
Words are inherently empty and yet
    still I am fond of brush and ink.
My mind like ashes after the fire and yet
    still I am tied to the world.
Window bamboo—empty mind;
    courtyard pine—innate purity:
The trunk of this lofty green tree
    neither inherently form nor non-form.

> Between bell and fish-drum,
>
> I've yet to grasp the essence of Dharma:
>
> Yet I get a whiff of its fragrance
>
> as if I were aboard the Ship of Compassion.[15]

This poem reflects an ongoing struggle on the part of the speaker to purge herself of worldly attachments and understand the nature of Mahayana Buddhist emptiness, *sunyata.* In fact, the principal struggle is not with her attachment to worldly comfort or familial consolation—Miaohui had no memories of connubial bliss—but rather to words and language. However, the last two lines seem to indicate that she is not a spiritual novice and that she has reached a certain level of meditative self-transcendence.

Wanxian and Miaohui were women who might not have entered the religious life had their social circumstances been different. There were, however, other women who, whether married or not, appear to have had a religious vocation from very early on. Thus, for them the religious life represented a final goal rather than a last resort. In the seventeenth century, for example, there were a number of Chan Buddhist nuns of considerable repute—many of them abbesses of large monastic communities—and considerable poetic talent as well. In many ways, these nuns represent the Qing-dynasty equivalent of the female Chan dharma heirs of the Song dynasty such as Miaodao about which Miriam Levering and Ding-hwa E. Hsieh have written.[16] Like Miaodao, many of these women identified themselves as belonging to the Nanyue Huairang (677–744) lineage of the Linji school of Chan. Of a significant number it might be said, as Levering says of Miaodao, "she excelled as a poetic craftswoman of sermons and as an expositor of the essence of teaching and learning in [Linji Chan]."[17]

One of the more eminent of these was Chan master Weiji Xingzhi (d. 1672). Weiji was born to a distinguished family from Yaojiang, in what is today Zhejiang province. Her father was a lay Buddhist, and as a young girl Weiji would often accompany him to visit Linji master Miyun Yuanwu (1565–1641). It appears that as a young girl she already knew she did not want to marry, and her family readily agreed to her taking the tonsure under Miyun's disciple Shiqi Tongyun (1594–1663), who was then residing at Xuedou Monastery in Ningbo. After undergoing several years of rigorous training, Weiji received Dharma transmission from Master Tongyun and in 1646 accepted the leadership of Xiongsheng Hermitage in Hangzhou. From all accounts, Master Weiji was a formidable teacher, known for her strict discipline as well as for her eloquent and forceful sermons, many of which were collected and circulated after her death. She was, however, also quite fond of writing lyrics such as the following:

> ***In Praise of the Plum***
>
> Spring has arrived,
>
> The swallows have come,
>
> Ice melts on the frosty branches
>
> The tiny calyx newly coy and charming.[18]

Weiji's gift of language was one shared by her disciple, Chaoyue Jingnuo. Jingnuo was the daughter of a county magistrate from Renhe (Zhejiang province). She entered the monastic life as a young girl and became Weiji's senior Dharma heir. She earned a reputation for

 compassionate but strict discipline and impeccable behavior and attracted hundreds of followers, many of them women of the gentry. It is possible that some of these women knew that behind Jingnuo's stern facade was a lover of poetry and of nature. One anecdote relates how she built a grass hut on the banks of the river. Every time she saw the blossoming plum on the myriad trees or the wildly blowing snow she would say, 'This is where true enlightenment is to be found."[19] The following poem by Jingnuo illustrates some of this profound feeling for the natural world.

Written at Year's End
The sequence of seasons naturally pushes forward,
Suddenly I am startled by the ending of the year.
Lifting my eyes I catch sight of the winter crows,
Calling mournfully as if wanting to complain.
The sunlight is cold rather than gentle,
Spreading over the four corners like a cloud.
A cold wind blows fitfully in from the north,
Its sad whistling filling courtyards and houses.
Head raised, I gaze in the direction of Spring,
But Spring pays no attention to me at all.
Time a galloping colt glimpsed through a crack,
The tap [of Death] at the door has its predestined time.
How should I not know, one who has left the world,
And for whom floating clouds are already familiar?
In the garden there grows a rosary-plum tree:
Whose sworn friendship makes it possible to endure.[20]

In another spring poem—spring normally the time for lamenting on the absence of love—we see the transformation of conventional expression of love longing into something quite different:

Spring Night: An Impromptu Verse
The wild reed flowers have stolen away with the breeze
The glowing jumble of spring wonders now nearly gone.
Leaning over the stone balustrade, I rest for a moment
As a patio of bright moon hovers between Being and Not.[21]

It would seem from her poems that Jingnuo found the religious life a perfect place to pursue both her intellectual and spiritual interests. The pleasure she derives from both is reflected in the following pentasyllabic regulated verse.

Living in Seclusion, Sitting in Stillness
Living in seclusion, one can simply do as one pleases,
With a single text, one can forget oneself for a while.
The daylight hours—how much time is there really?
Why then do I not exert myself!

Although the ancients are long gone,
Their wisdom must still be grasped.
From the empty eaves, water keeps dripping,
From the censer, ashes fall in seal-script patterns.
This mood always brings me great pleasure;
As with both hands, I hold the book tightly.
What a pity that people of the ordinary world
Miss out on this intimacy with the writings of the wise.[22]

Despite their obvious love of poetry, both Weiji and Jingnuo seemed to feel that it was a source of shame, although here we are probably dealing with a conventional pose rather than a heartfelt concern. Consider, for example the following quatrain written by Weiji in praise of the lotus.

On the Lotus Flower
Illusions emerge from this tiny thing
Stop all of this lotus-loving talk.
No dust clings to the leaves of this flower,
Henceforth I must be less loquacious![23]

The lotus has a double meaning. On the one hand it is the symbol of a religious purity that rises triumphant from the slime of the world. On the other, the Chinese word for lotus, *lian,* is an instantly recognizable homophone for the *lian* that means attachment: the reference to lotus loving *(ai'lian)* is a not-so-subtle allusion to *lian'ai* or loving attachment. Here, however, the attachment is not to a man or even to the secular world, but rather to a perceived "loquaciousness" that can, I believe, be interpreted here as "taking pleasure in language for the sake of language itself."

Like her teacher, Jingnuo also occasionally professed shame at the pleasure she derives from words. Late in life she is said to have noted to a disciple, somewhat ruefully, "The religious life does not rely on words and letters. I am already old, and I've managed to cleanse myself of all kinds of attachments; still I laugh at myself and this one remaining thought [binding me to the world of form]."[24]

The Chan school has always prided itself on its nonreliance on words and letters. This of course has not kept its followers from producing a very great number of words and letters, often rationalized as "skillful means." Although during the Sung the phrase *"bu li wenzi"* (to not rely on words and letters) could for all practical purposes be read *"bu li wenzi"* (to not separate oneself from words and letters), many Chan writers preferred to adhere to the traditional image—indeed, myth—of Chan as a form of Buddhism that bypassed the perils of language and went straight to the existential heart. By the Ming dynasty, however, there was a growing feeling that in these "latter days of the law" there was truly no way that the Dharma could be accessed without words and letters. In fact, Daguan Zhenke goes so far as to say that they are as inseparable as water and wave: "Words and letters are the waves; Chan is the water. Thus, trying to separate oneself from words and letters in order to seek Chan is like a thirsty person refusing to drink the waves: trying to get rid of the waves in order to find the water is the height of obscurantism."[25] This means that the use of verbal techniques, such as the investi-

 gation of *huatou* (capping phrase) and *gong'an* together with study of the various collections and compendiums of hagiographic and commentarial writings, became ever more central to Chan Buddhist practice. This did not mean, however, that the apparent contradiction was thereby resolved. Part of the problem was the somewhat vague boundary between language as a "skillful means" for the expression or transmission of the Dharma and language as a means of artistic self-expression and personal communication with literati laypeople. As William LaFleur puts it, "The writing of poetry and involvement in the world of lyrical exchange and competition constantly threatened to deflect the energies of those who had chosen a religious vocation."[26] A late-Ming formulation of this problem can be seen in the writings of Meditation Master Hanyue Fazang (1573–1635), who points out that those who engage in lettered Chan *(wenzi Chan)* may become "drowned in words and phrases," while those who espouse the Chan of shouts and blows *(banghe Chan)* risk "drowning in wordlessness."[27] In short, there was always the perceived danger that too deep an immersion in the world of words would lead to an "addiction" to language for its own sake.

This apparent dilemma was one shared by women religious as well, although again, with considerably different implications; in fact, for many it was not merely an intellectual conceit, but a very real issue. During the late-Ming and Qing periods, a significant number of elite women, including those who later entered the religious life, were afforded the classical literary education that had previously been largely denied women. They used their new literacy not only to read Confucian didactic texts—which some of their male contemporaries thought was quite enough—but also to express themselves, usually through poetry. Just as many women struggled with whether or not they should give up poetry writing after marriage and focus their energies on their domestic duties (some did, most did not), many otherwise committed Buddhist nuns were reluctant to give up their newfound expressive voice. Thus the ambivalence they express in their writings is rooted in a soil somewhat different from that of their male counterparts.

Just as some women actually burned their poems and discarded their brushes and inkwells once they had entered the "wifely way," some gave up writing poetry once they entered the Buddhist way. An extreme example is an eighteenth-century woman from Jiangsu named Shen Qiqin, a young maidservant in a gentry home. A very intelligent young woman, she learned how to read and write poetry based on what she could pick up from her educated mistress and her friends. Later she became interested in Buddhist practice and sought religious instruction from a Chan master who, after several interviews with her, said, "You truly have the seeds of the Buddhist way, but because of [your overreliance on] words and letters to explain the scriptures you have been unable to avoid falling into purely intellectual Chan." He then presented her with a meditation cushion, saying, "When this becomes tattered and torn, then you will have attained the true understanding."[28] Shen Qiqin apparently followed his advice and, according to her biographers, never again wrote or read another poem. In fact, she remained completely mute from that day on.

Another example is You Ying (*zi* Zhongyu), a courtesan from Hangzhou, who was known for her poetry as well as for her epistolary talents. However, when she became a nun, taking the religious name of Jieshi, she apparently repudiated all of her past literary pursuits. And from a later period, there is Liu Fang from Guangzhou, who sometime between 1821 and 1850 became a nun at Tandu Hermitage in Guangzhou and took the religious name of Wenxin. At first she did not relinquish her literary and artistic activities; in fact, she became

quite well known for her historical writing, her poetry, her calligraphy, and in particular her painting, which some compared to that of the monk-poet Shitao. After the age of thirty, however, Wenxin embarked on a life of almost total seclusion. Although she would still paint on occasion, she never again engaged in literary activities.[29]

Other Buddhist nuns chose to tread the razor's edge between writing for its own sake and writing as a means of expressing the Dharma, if only because they were religious teachers and leaders of religious communities and could not afford to keep silent. A good example is Meditation Master Jizong Xingche (b. 1606). Jizong was born in Hengzhou in what is today Hunan province. Her father, Liu Shanzhang (d. 1652), was an official with a deep interest in Buddhist teachings; he often took advantage of his official trips to different parts of China, and especially to the southeast, to visit with well-known Buddhist teachers and meditation masters. In a brief autobiographical piece clearly informed by hagiographic conventions, Jizong writes that on the night she was conceived, her father dreamt that he welcomed a Buddhist monk who came to the door in search of food and shelter. She also notes that even as a child she felt an aversion to meat and an attraction to the Buddhist teachings.[30]

Like a small but growing number of women from the gentry during this period, Jizong benefited from a classical education at home. Because of her father's interests, she read widely in both the Confucian classics and the Buddhist scriptures and also mastered the art of poetry writing. She tells us that, although she was reluctant to marry and would have much preferred to enter the religious life, she yielded to her parents' wishes and married a young scholar named Chen. Not long after the marriage, however, Chen fell ill while on an official trip in the south and died. Jizong mourned his death by building a small hermitage near her parents' home and devoting herself to her religious pursuits.

Feeling the need for spiritual guidance, Jizong sought the advice of a local Buddhist monk by the name of Haitian. One day, she writes, she noticed on Haitian's desk a collection of discourses by Chan teachers of the Nanyue Hairong lineage of Linji that had been copied and circulated by Meditation Master Shanci Tongji (1608–1646). Immediately she decided that this was the teacher with whom she wanted to study. As it happened, at that time Shanci Tongji, who was a Dharma heir of Master Miyun Yuanwu, was residing on Mount Heng. Jizong sought him out and requested an interview. Shanci Tongji assigned her a *gong'an* with which she struggled for forty-nine days and nights until one day a peal of thunder precipitated her initial enlightenment experience. It was only then, at the age of thirty-three, that she took the tonsure and became a nun.

Jizong apparently remained with Shanci Tongji until his death seven years later. In 1651, she decided to leave Mount Heng and travel to the Jiangnan area of southeast China, then the center of Buddhist culture, where she visited a number of Chan teachers in the lineage of Master Miyun Yuanwu, including Meditation Master Muyun Tongmen (d. 1671) in Jiaxing, Ruo'an Tongwen (1604–1655) in Hangzhou, and Wanru Tongwei (d. 1657) in what is today Suzhou. She apparently felt a special affinity with Wanru Tongwei, and it is from him that she finally received Dharma transmission and to whose lineage she officially belongs.

Jizong Xingche spent a number of years in the Jiangnan area, where her teaching attracted a great number of disciples, lay and monastic, male and female. According to her biographical accounts, she was particularly famous for her strict adherence to monastic discipline in a time many considered to be marked by general religious and moral decline. She was also known for her literary gifts. In 1654, at the age of forty-seven, she was invited to become the

 abbess of Huideng Chan Monastery in Suzhou. Two years later, a sizeable collection of her religious discourses and other writings, including a large number of poems, was compiled, printed, and widely circulated in the Jiangnan area. Little is known about her later life, and we have no dates for her death. However, from her poems it would appear that, after a couple of decades in Suzhou, she decided to return to her beloved Mount Heng in Hunan where she passed her final years.

As was the case with her contemporary, Master Zhiyuan Xinggang, who is discussed below, the question of gender rarely arises in her writings. However, in a Dharma talk delivered on the occasion of the birthday of a Buddhist laywoman, she refers to an anecdote found in the *yulu* of Song-dynasty Chan master Jingduan, more popularly known as Shizi Duan, or Lion Duan. The story is that the master, upon being informed that a nun was coming to him for an interview, got up early and smeared some bright red rouge on his cheeks. When the nun entered the room and saw the master thus bedecked she was startled into enlightenment. A monk who observed this exchange wrote the following verse:

> Laughable is this old bald-pated slave from Wushan,
> Cleverly smearing on red rouge to receive an honorable nun.
> In this vast universe there are people beyond counting,
> Where is there a man that can be said to be a "gentleman" *(zhangfu)?* [31]

Master Jizong simply comments, "The great way is from the beginning complete; what need is there to divide it into female and male?"[32]

The following poems are from a long sequence of verses titled "Living on Nanyue [Heng] Mountains: Miscellaneous Verses."

> From the creek bed, the wind rises with a whistle;
> Emotions emptied, then all things fill with mystery.
> I do not listen for the ruckus of carts and horses,
> In this remote place untouched by the dust of worldly cares.
> The leaves are falling like autumn itself growing old;
> The woods are sparse revealing the waterfall's curve.
> Putting aside ambitions, the seagull and the egret
> Are as close to me as the most intimate of friends.

> The gate requests the vigilance of the wandering clouds
> To keep the abbess' quarters hidden away and pure.
> Woodland gibbons go out hunting for ripening fruit,
> While nesting birds fly deep into the forest trees.
> I've avoided completely the trap of transitory fame,
> Delighting instead in the transcendent Dharma Mind.
> The emptiness of emptiness—beyond even the four phrases.[33]
> A contentment as rare as a mustard seed on the tip of a pin.[34]

The eminent nun-poet Linji meditation master Zhiyuan Xinggang (1597–1654), about whom I have written elsewhere, was a student of Linji meditation master Miyun Yuanwu and

a Dharma heir of one of Yuanwu's senior disciples, Shiche Tongsheng (1593–1638).[35] Born in Jiaxing, she was the only child of a religiously minded couple from the scholarly class, Hu Rihua and his wife, Mme. Tao. As a girl, she received a solid classical education, and early on showed a gift for poetry; her name is listed in the Jiaxing gazetteer in the section of "talented women."[36] We are told that, following her parents' example, she spent a considerable amount of time worshiping at the family altar, and that when the time came for her to be married, she expressed a desire to remain single and devote her life to her religious practices. Her parents refused to permit this, and proceeded to find a suitable husband for her. In this way, at the age of eighteen, she found herself engaged to a young licentiate. However, not long after the betrothal, he succumbed to illness and died, leaving Xinggang a widow even before she had become a bride. As was the custom, she went to live with her fiancé's family and did her best to fulfill the duties expected of a filial daughter-in-law. Apparently, however, she continued to nourish her religious aspirations and, feeling the lack of spiritual guidance and an acute awareness of the passage of time, fell into a deep depression.

Xinggang's parents—and her in-laws as well—were exceedingly fond of her and became anxious about what they clearly perceived as excessive behavior. In particular they were worried about Xinggang's health, and they forbade her to engage in prolonged vegetarian fasting. Xinggang, who was twenty-five years old at this point and determined not be dissuaded any longer, responded by giving up eating and drinking altogether. Only then did her family relent and allow her to formally take refuge with an elderly Buddhist teacher by the name of Master Tiantong Cixing at a nearby temple.

Thus began a lengthy period of more formal religious training marked by considerable delays, obstacles, and difficulties. We do not know much about Xinggang's initial spiritual training under Master Cixing, although we do know that she remained at home during this time, taking care of her in-laws and watching over her own parents as well. Five years later her father passed away, and two years after that, she decided that she had progressed enough in her religious practice to pay a visit to Cixing's own teacher, the famous Linji meditation master Miyun Yuanwu, who in the spring of 1624 had become the head of Guanghui Chan Monastery (also known as Jinsu Monastery), a flourishing community of more than three hundred monks on nearby Mount Jinsu.

Xinggang wanted to become a nun, but Yuanwu sent her home when he discovered that not only had she not completed the three-year mourning period for her deceased father, but also that her mother was still alive.[37] Xinggang returned home, where she continued her practice, the investigation of a *huatou* given to her by Master Yuanwu. A year passed, and still she had made no headway. Again, she became profoundly depressed and discouraged. Then, when Xinggang was thirty-four *sui,* her mother passed away. Now that both of her parents were gone, and convinced that she would make no further progress if she remained at home, she resolved to enter the religious life formally. Although her in-laws tried hard to dissuade her, she gave away all of her property, clothes, and jewelry and moved into a small chapel near her parents' graves. The following year, she took the tonsure.

Xinggang continued her study with Master Shiche Tongsheng. In Master Tongsheng (who eventually took over the leadership of the monastery on Mount Jinsu and became known as Jinsu Tongsheng), Xinggang had finally found a teacher who could help her. She was already thirty-six *sui,* and almost exactly ten years had passed since she had formally begun her religious training.

Master Tongsheng was an exceedingly tough mentor, and Xinggang's struggle was far from over. At their first interview, he assigned her the famous *gong'an,* "What was your original face before your father and mother were born?" Xinggang struggled with this for a full year before returning for a second interview with her teacher. When she was unable to answer the question to his satisfaction, he scolded her and sent her off again, warning her that she should not even bother to come back for a third interview unless she had something to show for it. Distraught, Xinggang gave herself seven days to reach enlightenment. Berating herself for her stupidity and plagued by nightmares, she wept bitterly in front of a statue of Buddha. One day, as she was seated in meditation, her darkened room suddenly filled with blazing light, which was just as suddenly obscured by a dark, cloudlike mist. After this experience, she redoubled her efforts until she began to spit blood and found it impossible to eat or drink. She was in despair, but afraid to ask for guidance directly from Master Tongsheng.

Although Master Tongsheng could not gainsay Xinggang her achievement, over the next several years he continued to test her, prodding her on to greater depths of insight or, perhaps, convincing both himself and his male disciples of Xinggang's spiritual attainments. Finally, he formally presented her with staff and robe as symbols of the transmission.

In 1638, Master Tongsheng began to show signs of illness and summoned Xinggang for a final interview, after which he pronounced her a Dharma heir. Xinggang was forty-two *sui.* In 1647, a certain Mme. Dong, along with a group of lay devotees from nearby Meixi, invited Xinggang to become abbess of a Dong family chapel, which had recently been refurbished and given a new name, Fushi Chan Cloister. Initially reluctant, she finally agreed. From the beginning, people referred to her as another Moshan Liaoran (d. 895), perhaps the most famous nun of the Tang dynasty and, more significantly, an influential and highly respected abbess who counted a number of eminent male Buddhists as her disciples. Although at first there were also those who doubted Xinggang's ability to run a monastic establishment, she soon proved to be a charismatic teacher with high standards of morality and strict discipline. She began to attract great numbers of both lay and monastic followers, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, none of whom she turned away. Xinggang was unstinting in her generosity, providing food and medical care for all those who requested them. Eventually, it became necessary to add buildings to house all of those who came seeking shelter.

Xinggang appears to have had a particular reputation for integrity and discipline in what was considered by many to be a time of decline and decay. In fact, she clearly saw her mission as one of reform and revival of what she considered to be the original values of the Chan lineage. On one side of her seat, she had carved the following admonition by Master Gaofeng Yuanmiao: "If by opening your mouth and moving your tongue, you do not benefit others, then do not speak; if by lifting your feet and going somewhere you do not benefit others, then do not go; if my applying your mind and directing your thoughts you do not benefit others, then refrain from doing it."[38] Significantly, on the other side of the seat she had carved the three goals Confucius is said to have laid out for himself: to comfort the aged, be worthy of your friends' trust, and cherish the young.

Xinggang's many charitable activities were grounded in a strong emphasis on spiritual cultivation, in particular meditation and *huatou* practice. She appears to have been a charismatic and eloquent teacher, and people came from all over to listen to her sermons and Dharma talks. She died in 1654, leaving seven female Dharma heirs and a collection of Dharma talks, poems, and other writings.

Master Xinggang was greatly admired for her literary eloquence. Although she would often warn her male lay disciple Zheng Yundu of the danger of losing oneself in the "sea of words and the river of poetry" *(wenhai shijiang)* and of the necessity of attending to one's meditation practice,[39] this admonition did not keep her from writing a great number of poems herself, some even based on the rhyme schemes of poems by Zheng himself. What is remarkable about her poems, a small selection of which follows, is their undeniable air of authority, that of the abbess who goes on retreat, conscious that she has built up a flourishing monastic community. She even goes so far as to intimate that she is one of the ones responsible for renewing the Linji spirit—raising again the flywhisk of Mazu—in an age of corruption and decay. But the authority of inner spiritual experience is also expressed here, an authority that is so certain of itself that it can afford to be a complete fool and let go of all method whatsoever.

The first poem is one of a series of verses titled "The First Month of the Summer Retreat: Random Verses."

> In all of the old gates and halls, the work of the lineage flourishes;
> Knowing my own lazy ignorance, I've hidden away in order to be still.
> Esoteric methods, blows and shouts[40] —I am giving them all a rest:
> The myriad dharmas merge in emptiness—stop asking about Chan!

In another set of verses, also written on retreat, she again makes allusion to her busy life.

> After teaching and preaching, running about for so many years:
> Now I've shut my door and retired to the hidden forest spring
> Heaven and earth kicked open, now my feet can stop moving:
> Alone I sit before the winter window, the shimmering moon full.
>
> Spending all day as would a fool: no need for any method
> Here within there is neither existence nor nonexistence.
> Solidly I sit until the road of the sage and fool is as one:
> Since time immemorial to the present day it has been so.[41]

Yet another series of verses was inspired by the paraphernalia of religious life, and in particular that of an abbess, including the meditation cushion, the staff, the fly whisk, and so on.

> ***Meditation Cushion***
> A single meditation cushion and one is completely protected;
> Earth may crumble, heaven collapse—here one is at peace.
> Sacred titles and worldly fame, both fade away in the sitting,
> As a great chiliocosm assembles on the tip of a feather.[42]
>
> ***Fly Whisk***
> Swoosh, swoosh, the true tradition uncovers all that is hidden:
> Held sideways and forcefully used it betters the atmosphere!
> Once in years gone by, Mazu took it and hung it on the wall:
> Today what harm is there in lifting it up and waving it again.

Alms Bowl

If it leaks and leaves nothing, what use if it is so large?
When hungry eat, thirsty drink, leave not a speck of dust.
Understand that once washed, nothing more need be done;
How many lost souls insist on attaching a handle to it?[43]

Finally, there is a poem-sermon, titled "Renewed Admonitions to the Assembly."

This floating life a changeable dream, yet we bitterly toil away;
The entire day full of busyness, as our karma grinds us down.
If only you can make a clean sweep of the cave of ignorance,
Nothing will remain but a life full of leisurely freedom and ease!

Human life and this mirage of a world keep are kept going by desire:
Once desire stops, all is the realm of the Great Enlightened One.
The lords of the heavens and hells will find themselves speechless:
Having poked through the web, there will be no conditions of desire.

The mind always composed and calm: that is the original purity.
Careful study and accumulation of facts: turbid worldly emotions.
If you straightaway change your life and step onto the further shore,
Your ignorance will spontaneously shatter with a laugh and a song!

Understand the ordinary mind, and the realized one is naturally complete:
Ask urgently who you were before your father and mother were born.
Once you have broken through and caught a glimpse of the original child,
Mountain blossoms and flowing water will rejoice together with you.[44]

Not only were many of Master Xinggang's disciples of a distinctly literary bent, so were several of her female Dharma heirs. Perhaps the most outstanding in this regard was Yikui Chaochen. She was the great-granddaughter of Sun Jianxiao, who at one point held the position of minister of justice, and the daughter of scholar and painter Sun Maoshi and his wife, Mme. Gao.[45] She had two sisters and two brothers, one of whom, Zhongduan, better known as Layman Zilin (Zilin jushi), would play a particularly central role in her life.

Yikui was by all accounts a precociously intelligent girl; she not only mastered the feminine arts of sewing and embroidery, but also excelled in the arts of painting and poetry. In late adolescence, she was married to a young scholar by the name of Sheng Jun and, in her biographer's words, was devoted to the wifely way *(fudao)* and loved and respected by her in-laws. She also seems to have enjoyed a "companionate" marriage with her husband, with whom she shared many intellectual and artistic interests. Thus, it came as a particular shock when her husband suddenly fell seriously ill. Realizing the gravity of his illness and knowing that he would perhaps never recover, Sheng contemplated taking the vows of a Buddhist monk. With this in mind, he invited a Buddhist teacher by the name of Master Linquan to the house to give him religious instructions. Yikui apparently sat in on these discussions, which where

her first introduction to deeper levels of Buddhist teachings. In the fall of 1648, Sheng passed away, leaving Yikui a widow at the age of twenty-three.

After her husband's death, Yikui retreated to her room, where she remained in seclusion, eating a minimal vegetarian diet and engaging in single-minded Buddha recitation *(nianfo).* On the wall she wrote in large characters, "The myriad dharmas all return to the One." It would seem that at first Yikui practiced primarily Pure Land devotions, traditionally considered to be the most appropriate for women in her situation.

Seeing that Yikui's interest in religious cultivation continued unabated after a year, her brother Zilin suggested that she try Chan practice. Zilin had himself been involved in various religious practices from a very early age and over time had become a strong advocate of the Three-in-One movement, which emerged in the late Ming around the figure of Lin Zhao'en (1517–1598).[46] He seems to have had particular success with investigating a *huatou,* and he suggested to her sister that she do the same. Her practice involved the sustained inquiry into the phrase "Who am I?"

For the next year or so, Yikui remained in her room struggling with her *huatou.* It was a difficult period, and she grew more and more frustrated and depressed, especially when she compared herself with Zilin, who seemed so easy and carefree. Redoubling her efforts, she soon found herself at the brink of a physical and nervous breakdown. What appears to have saved her was an informal "support group" made up of her mother and several other laywomen who met for group devotions and discussions. Finding that she was still not making much progress, she decided to seek out the advice of Master Xinggang, who was by then abbess of Fushi Chan Cloister.

Yikui had heard of Master Xinggang earlier—both her parents and Zilin had been to visit her many times. There are several letters addressed to Zilin in Master Xinggang's discourse records, and Mme. Gao had even become a formal lay disciple of hers. For some reason, however, Yikui had chosen to remain confined in her room and pursue her practice alone, with little guidance apart from that offered by her brother. In 1651, however, when Yikui was twenty-six, she decided to go with her mother to visit Master Xinggang and seek her advice.

Master Xinggang appears to have recognized Yikui's determination and spiritual potential, as she immediately accepted her as a lay disciple. However, she advised her to continue to carry out her *huatou* practice at home. Later that winter, Yikui returned with her mother to Fushi Chan Cloister to practice under the supervision of Xinggang. This time, she was finally able to "solve" her *huatou.*

Two years after her initial meeting with Master Xinggang, Yikui decided to take the tonsure. She returned all of the goods and property she had inherited from her husband's family to them, as well as the dowry her parents had provided her at the time of her marriage. In this way, she entered the convent "bare and empty-handed" to the astonishment of her relatives, who expressed first consternation and then admiration. She lived at Fushi Chan Cloister until Master Xinggang's death in 1654, after which she moved into a small hermitage that her brother Zilin built for her by the river. He had named it Cantong (Investigating commonality) Hermitage, reflecting his syncretic sympathies. Yikui, now Meditation Master Yikui Chaochen, began to attract disciples.

Because her formal training had been interrupted by Master Xinggang's death, she sought spiritual guidance from other Buddhists masters. She took the full ordination from

 Muchen Daowen (1596–1674), also known as Hongjue Guoshi (National Teacher Hongjue, an honorary title bestowed upon him by the emperor in 1659). She also maintained religious and literary friendships with many other monks, nuns, and lay men and women.

Yikui Chaochen appears to have been very happy at Cantong Hermitage. This seemingly idyllic life came to an abrupt end in 1667 when, seven years after taking over the leadership of Fushi Chan Cloister, Yigong Chaoke (1620–1667), Master Xinggang's designated successor and Yikui's Dharma sister, fell ill from exhaustion and overwork. She begged Yikui to come to Fushi Chan Cloister and take over her duties while she was bedridden. Not long after, Yigong passed away, having first formally designating Yikui as her successor.

As abbess of Fushi Chan Cloister, Yikui was quite active, building memorial stupas and supervising the construction of several new buildings and dharma halls, using money donated by lay devotees who had come to respect her highly disciplined and inspired leadership. Yikui also made use of her acknowledged literary gifts to write the official biography of Master Xinggang, as well as to complete a *gong'an* casebook that her teacher had left unfinished. Yikui's own collection of religious discourses and other writings was compiled by her disciples before her death in 1679 at the age of fifty-four.

Many of the poems and other writings contained in Yikui's collected works are addressed to disciples, both lay and monastic, or written in commemoration of a particular religious or ritual occasion. A number of poems, however, give us a glimpse into Yikui's own inner religious experience; in other words, they go beyond the purely conventional or didactic, and serve as a form of self-expression of more personal feelings. Many of these poems are addressed to other nuns, and indicate the depth of feeling that clearly existed between these "sisters in solitude."[47] The following poem also hints at the work that has gone into the rebuilding and renovation of the nunnery itself.

Presented to My Chan Companion, Dongyun
The ancient hall looks quite dignified, completely renewed.
Locked deep inside the cave of clouds is a kindred soul.
Burning incense, silently sitting, we understand each other;
The tale told by the tongueless is the most novel of all.[48]

Another poem, the first of a sequence of verses describing the self-imposed immobility and isolation of the three-month summer retreat of *anju* (dwelling in peace), during which monks and nuns were not allowed to leave the monastery or convent, poignantly describes a woman trying to sustain her spiritual practice in the face of illness.

Sleepless because of a Cold
My entire body is feverish; I cannot keep from coughing:
Rising I sit with my robes pulled about me as the air slowly clears.
Emerging from a state of meditation, first burning then damp.
No sounds except a barking dog echoing through the village.[49]

Yet another sequence of poems conveys an even more positive side of the spiritual life: the inner expansiveness and freedom that often blossoms in the contemplative life and the deep and often profound intimacy to be found in the companionship of a friend who shares that life and its ultimate values.

Meditation: Five Gathas

Once the layered gates are broken open, any place is a peaceful place;
Once the mind is detached from things, then sorrow is transformed.
When I have leisure I sit straight beneath the shade of the pine tree
And watch as gradually the toad in the moon rises to hang in the east.

When one freely speaks of the Dharma, the heavenly flowers fall,
When one deliberates and debates, things only confuse one.
With the right opportunity and the good fortune nothing is impossible;
Knocking on emptiness, extracting the marrow becomes a way of life.[50]

So marvelously sublime it is to discuss mysteries layered like clouds:
It is not easy to meet someone who is truly of the same mind.
The red stove blazes forth with an extraordinary determination
As if it once had the natural power to turn the Dharma wheel.

This toiling life disordered and confused by lust and greed and anger:
But when the mind-flower suddenly opens, the entire earth is Spring.
Melting snow to boil water for tea, we while away the entire day:
Inside of me, I feel vast and expansive like a waterwheel.

A tiny boat in the moonlight stirs foam flowers on the water,
Blossoming water lilies send across their fragrances in the dark.
Hearing, seeing, knowledge and consciousness are all one Dharma;
Defilements cleansed, we can be lazy and let our hair hang down.[51]

Two other Buddhist nuns from this period, about whom we have even less biographical information, were clearly deserving of membership in this particular group of religious "literata." The first of these is Master Baochi Jizong, whose collected discourses in two fascicles were printed in 1677.[52] We know that she was born in Jiaxing (Jiangsu province) sometime in the first quarter of the seventeenth century to a prominent gentry-official family named Jia. We also know that she was married to the son of another prominent family, Tai Puzhi of Suzhou, who died not long after the marriage. After her husband's death, she began spending most of her time with the abbess of the nearby Lingrui Nunnery, Master Jifu Zukui.[53] Abbess first of Lingrui Nunnery and later Miaozhan Nunnery in Xiuzhou, Master Jifu Zukui left behind five fascicles of religious discourses—a relatively large collection that tells us little about her personal religious experience, but a great deal about her literary skills and mastery of the philosophical and literary sources of the Chan tradition. In any case, we are told that one day Master Jifu Zukui introduced Jizong to the written religious discourses of her own teacher, Linji Chan master Tuiweng Hongchu (1605–1672), who at that time was residing at the famous Lingyan Monastery in Suzhou. Jizong was so impressed by what she read that she immediately went to Lingyan, took the tonsure, and formally became Hongchu's disciple.

Baochi Jizong maintained her friendship with Jifu Zukui, later joining her at Miaozhan Nunnery, and together they authored *The Collection of Combined Echoes of Poetic Commentaries on Ancient Cases (Song gu he xiang ji),* a series of poetic commentaries on the cases of the great Tang- and Song-dynasty Chan teachers. This collection was edited and published by the

 prominent Buddhist layman Zhang Youyu, better known as Layman Dayuan (*jinshi* 1622; d. 1669), a lay disciple of Master Tuiweng Hongchu.[54]

Master Jifu Zukui left another collection of discourses and writings, entitled the *Yanhua ji*, in five fascicles.[55] The poems are on a relatively wide variety of topics, many more than in the *Collection of Combined Echoes*. Here we see the more social side of this abbess—many of the poems are addressed to monks and nuns from different monasteries and nunneries in the Jiangnan area, including Master Zhiyuan Xinggang and Xinggang's female Dharma heir Yigong Chaoke, who had begun her studies with Tuiweng Hongchu. Jifu Zukui also appears to have traveled a great deal in the Jiangnan area, often accompanied by her disciples, both lay and monastic. In fact, unlike the more religiously conventional poems or *gathas* found in her other collection, many of the religious discourses make use of a particular setting or occasion, whether boating on the river or viewing the moon, as the beginning of a discussion on more metaphysical issues. To give just one example, at a moon-viewing festival celebrated with a number of lay followers, an old woman, perhaps a peasant, asked Jifu Zukui why it was that the moon waxed and waned. Master Jifu answered by reminding her that, for all its waxing and waning, it was always the same moon. A simple, even simplistic, reply but certainly in accordance with certain basic notions of an unchanging Buddha nature behind the seeming inconsistencies of personality and everyday life in general.

Both of these nuns were clearly very much influenced by the religious and literary preferences of their teacher, Master Tuiweng Hongchu. Hongchu greatly admired, for example, a famous sequence of verses composed by Meditation Master Cishou Huaishen (d. 1132), an eminent Song-dynasty Linji Chan teacher closely associated with Lingyan Monastery in Suzhou. Highly regarded in his own day, Cishou Huaishen was summoned by the emperor in 1121 to be the abbot of the principal monastery in Bianjing (present-day Kaifeng), the capital of the Northern Song. In 1126, with the Northern Song facing imminent destruction by the nomad invaders from the north, Cishou returned to his home in the south. Very much loved and warmly welcomed, after traveling to various sites in Jiangsu and Zhejiang, he finally accepted an invitation to come to Lingyan Monastery in Suzhou. He lived at Lingyan for three years before moving to nearby Mount Bao, where he spent the last years of his life building, rebuilding, and generally restoring the religious environment. Nearly five hundred years after his death, Cishou's poetry continued to be cherished, particularly by religious men and women from the Linji Chan Buddhist lineage most closely associated with Lingyan Monastery. Master Tuiweng Hongchu wrote his own series modeled on Cishou Huaishen's "Cloud-dispelling Pavilion," as did Baochi Jizong and Jifu Zukui. The following verses are from the series composed by Jizong.

> Unseasoned food, yellow pickles, but enough to eat one's fill;
> Clothes tattered and torn but still I feel free and at ease.
> When tired I tuck in my feet and sit on the meditation mat;
> When guests arrive, I teach without even raising my head.[56]

Whether or not these poems reflected their own personal experience, all of these women clearly sought to emulate, if only poetically, the nonchalant and imperturbable spirit of the old masters. And who is to say that they were not able to achieve some of that spirit—and spiritual authority—themselves!

Finally, there is Lianghai Rude, for whom we have scarcely any biographical information other than that she lived in the early nineteenth century, almost two hundred years after Yikui Chaochen, and was abbess of a large convent (housing perhaps as many as six thousand nuns) on Mount Lingyan in Suzhou. But here again, there is much to be gleaned from the selection (part of a much larger collection no longer extant) of her writings available to us. We owe the preservation of this collection, titled *Yingxiang ji,* to a contemporary Buddhist layman, Jiang Yuanliang (active midnineteenth c.). In his preface to the *Yingxiang ji,* Jiang notes that, when he and his Buddhist friends began to compile a collection of religious poetry from Suzhou titled *Wumen sizhong dizi shi* (Poetry of disciples of the four classes of Buddhist followers from Wumen), they discovered that they had ample selections from three of the four classes—monks, laymen, and laywomen—but it was difficult to find works from the fourth class: nuns. "Could it be," he asks, "that they taught solely through their physical presence *(shenjiao)* rather than through words?"[57] He goes on to describe how he came across the *Yingxiang ji* in the home of a Buddhist layman from Suzhou named Yao Huming.[58] Although this collection is composed primarily of poems, it also includes others types of writings. Notable is a sermon, addressed to the nuns under her guidance, that sheds light on Lianghai Rude's perception of the state of the Buddhist monastic communities, in particular the nun's sangha, during this period.[59]

Lianghai begins her sermon by reminding her audience that although the spiritual odds are against them, the cause is not necessarily hopeless. She does this by referring to the final chapter of the Avatamsaka Sutra, commonly known as the Gandavyuha, which begins with Buddha entering a form of concentration or samadhi called "the coming forth of the lion." In this state of samadhi, a boundless cosmic space is opened up in which gather all buddhas, bodhisattvas, and enlightened beings of space and time. From this, Manjushri sets out to instruct the youth Sudhana, sending him on a journey to visit with various teachers and enlightened beings. These include a number of women—goddesses, courtesans, laywomen, and young girls—but only one nun, Sinhavijumbhita.[60] Nevertheless, the presence of that one nun is significant, says Lianghai.

Later in the sermon, the abbess not only refers again to the Gandavyuha, but also to another story of gender-transcendence, that of the Dragon King's daughter.[61] She notes that of the six thousand nuns who make up their community at Mount Lingyan, there has not yet been a single recorded case of someone's becoming enlightened, whereas as soon as the Dragon-King's daughter appeared, the entire great assembly was inspired. Thus, our six thousand nuns might be close to becoming Dharma teachers *(fashi),* but they are very far from becoming buddhas. "Within the lion's roar, the fifty-three teachers of the Avatamsaka are contained. As long as we nuns stop thinking of ourselves as helpless, there is no inherent 'close' or 'far' in the Dharmadhatu."[62]

Lianghai realizes that it is not all a question of weakness of character; much has to do with the unfortunate state of the monastic communities of the time. Monastics in general, she laments, seem to care more for "fame and profit" than for enlightenment: "as soon as their heads are shaved, they think they are high and mighty. Lacking insight even into their own minds, they accept the respect and homage of others." However, she continues, while both monks and nuns are guilty of this kind of conduct, monks can at least benefit from the existence of many Chan monasteries that still adhere strictly to religious discipline and are headed by abbots able to instruct and enlighten their followers. Thus, "although the monks

 may be lost and confused, gradually they will be able to attain a clear insight." In the nun's communities, however, "the entire day is spent in noisy chatter as we pursue the pleasures of the senses. Avidly seeking from that which is external, we never turn inward in contemplation. Our teachers do not impart instruction, and our disciples do not learn."

It is interesting that Lianghai ascribes this lamentable state of affairs not only to a lack of good teachers, but also to a tendency of women to get distracted by trivial thoughts and mental dispersion. She therefore urges her disciples to single-mindedly practice repentance, compassion, meditation, and the purification and control of the body. Perhaps then, if they "separate themselves completely from the world of women," "abandon all the habits of their sex," and "wholeheartedly carry out the work of liberation," they will be able to make the transition from Dharma teacher to buddha. And only then can they hope to be "looked up to as [spiritual] models throughout the ten directions; only then will the four groups (monks, nuns, laymen, and laywoman) gather around them for inspiration."

The abbess does not limit herself to admonitions, but also offers some very practical spiritual advice. It is clear that for Lianghai, spiritual practice is about one thing and one thing only. "Being a holy nun *(shenni),*" she reminds her disciples, "has nothing to do with the possession of spiritual powers or the ability to preach the Dharma." Rather it is all a matter of countering mental dispersion and agitation with single-minded and focused attention.

> If you focus your mind on a single place without stopping and without resting, then this one thing, which is the original source of everyone, will manifest itself in everyone without exception. It is because the source of the mind has not yet been extended that one agitatedly floats through the world. This is in fact why the entire day is passed in wayward thoughts and shady profit-making schemes. [It is why] you are unable to achieve the truth and attain fields of merit.

Moreover, this single-minded attention is the only way to uproot the "seeds and habits of desire that as women we have accumulated over the many kalpas." In this Lianghai seems to be echoing the traditional belief that birth as a woman is the result of a particularly heavy weight of negative karma.

> When your practice of concentration has deepened, from your state of tranquility, you will be able to see the seeds of desire, and again, you can use the practice of concentration to get rid of them. In fact, if your practice of concentration is powerful enough, these seeds of desire will wither away of themselves, and you will have completely cut off the mental debt of ordinary sentient beings.

For Lianghai, this practice of concentration—with Pure Land recitation and Chan meditation equally effective in this regard—was "a solitary but glorious" thing, the most important thing of all. In this same sermon, she offers a marvelous way of telling if one is practicing correctly: "If throughout every hour of the day, it feels like there is not a single thing happening, and yet it seems as if there is something happening, then that is spiritual cultivation." Certainly it would seem that Lianghai herself had realized the state of complete and sustained awareness, a state that, in the end, was simply a manifestation of the Pure Land in the here and

now. This is expressed quite straightforwardly in the following poem from a sequence of four-line *gathas* titled "Pure Land Poems."

Bright and luminous is the Pure Land
  right in front of your eyes.
Don't bother about setting out
  in search of the golden immortals.

There is a road to the Land of Joy,
  who will find it first?
So very near are the mountains of home
  alongside the setting sun.

As early as the Song dynasty, Buddhist teachers such as Yongming Yanshou (904–975) taught that Pure Land and Chan Buddhism were but different aspects or projections of a single Mind, and as such, there was no inherent contradiction between them. This idea was further developed by the so-called four great Buddhist masters of the Ming: Zibo Zhenke (1543–1603), Yunqi Zhuhong (1535–1615), Ouyi Zhixu (1599–1655), and Hanshan Deqing (1546–1623), all of whom advocated dual-practice Pure Land and Chan, *"can xiu Chan jing."* Central to this synthesis of Pure Land and Chan was the practice of *nianfo,* Buddha-recitation. Teachers such as Deqing taught the use of *nianfo* as a *gong'an.* As he explained it, "The Chan practice stresses the state in which no thought *(nian)* arises. It is said that the practice of [*nianfo*] stresses the continuation of pure thought. This means that one keeps the four words Amitofo in one's mind as a pure thought."[63] Central to this is the idea that birth in the Pure Land will take place in this very life—in the mind-only Pure Land that is entered upon not when one dies, but as soon as one's mind becomes purified.[64] Or, to quote Master Sheng'an Shixian (1686–1734), known as the ninth patriarch of Pure Land Buddhism:

With a single phrase Amituofo,
One can bring all the teachings into one.
The present moment is none other than the Western Paradise;
Why wait until the brink of death to realize it?[65]

Lianghai's poems celebrate this here-and-now realization, which not only transforms one's vision of the world, but also significantly "lightens" one's response to it.

Rubble and ruin, brambles and briars,
  are the true Pure Land
Seeing, hearing, knowing, feeling
  is the ancient Amitabha.
If only at the place where you are
  you can forget all distinctions,
And clap your hands "Ha! Ha!"
  And sing "La! La!"

This combination of anticipation of birth in the more spiritually propitious milieu of the Pure Land and realization that one need not wait until death to experience it is expressed in another of the poems from this sequence.

> In order to form a basis [for birth]
> In the Western Regions, the Pure Land,
> Right and wrong, oneself and other
> must be completely overturned.
> From toe to heel and heel to toe
> is the Land of the Lotus Flower.
> What need, having reached the shore,
> to go in search of a raft?

But perhaps the most lovely of these poems is the following.

> Sitting alone in deep seclusion,
> the myriad cares forgotten.
> My whole body feels completely absorbed
> into that of the Dharma King.
> Cease using "delusion" and "enlightenment"
> to obscure the eye of the mind.
> When the flower of true awareness blooms,
> its fragrance will encircle the world.

Most striking about Lianghai's writings, especially her poems, may be their buoyancy. These are not the poems of a woman who has turned against the world out of weariness and disenchantment, but rather one who has found an inner freedom, independence, and joy that she may not have found had she kept to her place in the inner chambers. We see this in a poem in which she chooses the image of a "solitary man" to express her freedom from both physical and emotional entanglements.

> Look at him, that solitary man,
> Truly a man with nothing to do.
> Between coming in and out, going to and fro,
> Easy and free, with not even a walking staff.
> Although he lacks the love of sons and daughters,
> But neither does he suffer the nagging of a wife.
> On a whim he sits himself beneath the trees,
> And gazes at the white of the plum blossoms.
> Or walks until he reaches the mountain top,
> And sits to watch the spot from where clouds rise.[66]

She may have chosen this image simply to convey her appreciation of the sort of freedom enjoyed by a man who, "although he lacks the love of sons and daughters," does not "suffer the nagging of a wife." However, given the context of writings such as the sermon quoted

earlier, it is likely that Lianghai chose the image and adopted the voice of a man rather than a woman to express her own disassociation with the traditionally feminine. She had indeed become an honorary male, with a male's attendant freedoms, thanks to her spiritual pursuits.

This poem may reflect an ideal rather than a reality. But it does stand in striking contrast to the admonitions of a midnineteenth-century popular Confucian text that strongly cautions its female audience to banish all thoughts of the religious life from their heads since

> monasteries and convents are located out in the desolate wilds. I ask you, what joy is there to be had there? Please regard those who remain at home; in the inner quarters their happiness is endless, as they [pursue] the path of sincere filiality within the home. They [enjoy] the unremitting love of their mother and father, and when they acquire a husband to be their companion, the harmonious affection they share is sweet. At their feet are sons and daughters, who will be able to ease their sorrows. I ask you, those nuns, where can they find joy and pleasure such as this?[67]

Notes

1. See Gao's preface to female Chan master Yigong's discourse records, the *Fushi Yigong Chanshi yulu,* 1:1b, in *Jiaxing Da zangjing,* 40 vols. (Taibei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongci, 1987; reprint of Ming-dynasty edition), 39:435, 1–7.
2. Miriam Levering, "Miao-tao and Her Teacher Ta-hui," in *Buddhism in the Sung,* ed. Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 188–219.
3. There is now a significant amount of scholarship on this topic. Good places to begin include Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994); Susan Mann, *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997); and Ellen Widmer and Kang-I Sung Chang, eds., *Writing Women in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997).
4. Quoted in Laurence G. Thompson, *Chinese Religion: An Introduction,* 5th ed. (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1996), 107. (I have modified his translation slightly, but without changing the meaning.)
5. Susan Mann, "Grooming a Daughter for Marriage: Brides and Wives in the Mid-Ch'ing Period," in *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society,* ed. Rubie Watson and Patricia B. Ebrey (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 226, n. 26.
6. Cai Hongsheng, *Nigu tan* (Guangzhou: Zhongshan daxue chubanshe, 1996).
7. See *Xu zangjing,* 109 (Taibei: Xinfeng chubanshe, 1968–1970; reprint of Nakano Tatsue, ed., *Dai Nihon zokuzōkyō* (Kyoto: Zōkyō shoin, 1905–1912), 106–126.
8. There are several reprints of this work. I have used the one reprinted in *Gao seng zhuan heji* (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1991).
9. For a discussion of the central role played by the Hou family during the late Ming, see Jerry Dennerline, *The Chia-ting Loyalists: Social Change in Seventeenth-Century China* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1981), 132 ff.
10. Wanyan Yunzhu, comp., *Guochao guixiu zhengshi ji* (Hongxiang guan, 1831–1836), supplement, 9b.
11. Ibid., 10b.
12. *Two Zen Classics: Mumonkan and Hekiganroku,* trans. Katsuki Sekida (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1977), 193.
13. *Guochao guixiu zhengshi ji,* supplement, 10b–11a.
14. Ibid., 18b–19a.

15. The original line reads "bamboo window." However, it makes more sense (and forms a parallel couplet with the following line) if these two characters are reversed.
16. See Ding-hwa E. Hsieh, "Images of Women in Ch'an Buddhist Literature of the Sung Period," in *Buddhism in the Sung,* and Levering, "Miao-tao and Her Teacher Ta-hui."
17. Levering, "Miao-tao and Her Teacher Ta-hui," 21.
18. *Guochao guixiu zhengshi ji,* supplement, 14b.
19. Ibid., 13b.
20. Xu Shichang (1855–1939), *Wan Qing yishi hui,* 10 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 10:9163.
21. Ibid., 10:9162.
22. Ibid.
23. *Guochao guixiu zhengshi ji,* supplement, 14b.
24. *Wan Qing yishi hui,* 10:9162.
25. *Zibo zongzhe quanji,* in *Xu zangjing,* 126:444. Quoted and discussed in Guo Peng, *Ming Qing fojiao* (Fujian: Fujian remin chubanshe, 1982; rpt. 1985), 198.
26. William R. LaFleur, *The Karma of Words: Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 7.
27. Quoted in Guo, *Ming Qing fojiao,* 90–91. Because Fazang believed that ultimately, the latter posed the greater danger to spiritual practice, he was not popular among teachers like Miyun Yuanwu, who saw their mission as one of reviving the original Linji Chan tradition of shouts and blows.
28. *Guochao guixiu zhengshi ji,* supplement, 19b–20a.
29. Yu Jianhua, *Zhongguo meishujia renming cidian* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1981), 36.
30. See *Jizong che Chanshi yulu,* in *Mingban Jiaxing Da zangjing,* 28:441–470.
31. This anecdote may be found in *Wushan Jingduan Chanshi yulu, Xu zangjing,* 126:252–253.
32. This sermon of Jizong's is cited in Weiming, ed., *Chanlin zhuji: Biqiuni bian* (Tainan, Taiwan: Hegu chubanshe, 1988), 92.
33. A reference to the four forms of differentiation: that which exists, that which does not exist, that which neither exists nor does not exist, that which both exists and does not exist.
34. *Jizong che Chanshi yulu,* 462. The mustard seed is a common simile used to illustrate the difficulty of encountering a particular set of causes and conditions, such that that which allows for birth in the human realm, or the appearance of a Buddha.
35. Beata Grant, "Female Holder of the Lineage: Linji Chan Master Zhiyuan Xinggang (1597–1654)," *Late Imperial China* 17:2 (December 1996): 51–76. For Xinggang's discourse records, see *Fushi Zhiyuan Chanshi yulu,* in *Mingban Jiaxing Da zangjing,* 36:421–440.
36. *Jiaxingfu zhi* (Taibei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1970), 79:67b.
37. Hong Beimou, *Zhongguo mingni* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1995).
38. The original text, titled "Three Rules for the Instruction of Disciples," can be found in *Gaofeng Yuanmiao Chanshi yulu,* in *Xu zangjing,* 122:347.
39. *Fushi Zhiyuan Chanshi yulu,* 430.
40. An allusion to the traditional Linji (Rinzai) Chan Buddhist teaching methods made famous by the great Chan masters Linji Yixuan (d. 866) and Deshan Xuanjian (780–865). The former used shouts and the latter blows to shock their students out of their mental ruts and intellectual word-games.
41. *Fushi Zhiyuan Chanshi yulu,* 429.
42. In traditional Buddhist cosmology, in addition to the world most familiar to us, there are countless worlds or universes floating in space. One thousand of such worlds make up one small chiliocosm, one thousand small chiliocosms make up one middle chiliocosm, and one thousand middle chiliocosm make up one great chiliocosm.
43. Attaching a handle to an alms bowl is an image often used in Chan writings to refer to the tendency of many seekers to believe that enlightenment is something that is found outside of oneself and added on.
44. *Fushi Zhiyuan Chanshi yulu,* 429.
45. For her discourse records, see *Cantong Yikui Chanshi yulu,* in *Mingban Jiaxing Da zang jing,* vol. 39.
46. See Judith A. Berling, *The Syncretic Religion of Lin Chao-en* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).
47. This is the title of a comparative study of the Indian and Chinese female monastic regulations by Karma Lekshe Tsomo (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

48. *Cantong Yikui Chanshi yulu,* 12c.
49. Ibid.
50. According to legend, Bodhidharma (ca. 470–543?), popularly regarded as the First Patriarch of Chinese Chan Buddhism, after spending nine years at Shaolin Temple decided to return home to India. Before doing so, however, he decided to test the realization of his three senior disciples. In response to the first disciple's answer to his question, Bodhidharma said, "You have grasped my skin," and to the second disciple (a nun) he said, "You have grasped my bones." However, to the third disciple, who answered Bodhidharma's question not with words but with silence, he said, "You have grasped my marrow." This third disciple, Huike (487–593), is considered to have been Bodhidharma's Dharma successor and is known as the Second Patriarch of Chan Buddhism.
51. *Cantong Yikui Chanshi yulu,* 10b.
52. For her discourse records, see *Baochi zong Chanshi yulu,* in *Mingban Jiaxing Da zangjing,* 35:705–713.
53. For her discourse records, see *Lingrui ni Zukui Fu Chanshi Miaozhan lu,* in *Mingban Jiaxing Da zangjing,* 35:714–739. It is also interesting to note that there is a very lively "reconstruction" of Master Jifu as an irrepressible tomboy who despises needlework as a girl, is impatient with the rituals and regulations to which she is subjected as a young novice, and is not happy until she is accepted by Master Tuiweng himself, with whom she engages in fierce and clever Dharma battle. The author provides no references to his sources. See Li Zhiliang, *Hongchen fonü* (Zhengzhou: Henan chubanshe, 1998), 406–420.
54. See *Mingban Jiaxing Da zangjing,* 35:560–71.
55. *Lingrui Chanshi Yanhua ji,* in *Mingban Jiaxing Dazang jing,* 35:741–760.
56. *Baochi zong Chanshi yulu,* 712.
57. *Xiu xi wenjian lu,* 135:277a.
58. See *Xu zangjing,* 110:341a–344a. Hu Wenkai also notes an edition published in 1872 by the Rugao kejing chu. See *Lidai funu zhuzuo kao* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1985), 821.
59. *Yingxiang ji,* 343b–344a.
60. See Thomas Cleary, trans., *The Flower Garland Sutra* (Boston: Shambhala Press, 1993), 141–146.
61. See Miriam L. Levering, "The Dragon Girl and the Abbess of Mo-shan: Gender and Status in the Ch'an Buddhist Tradition," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 5:1 (1982): 19–35.
62. *Yingxiang ji,* 343b.
63. Cited in Hsu Sung-peng, *A Buddhist Leader in Ming China: The Life and Thought of Han-Shan Te-Ch'ing* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1979), 136.
64. See Leon Hurvitz, "Chu-hung's One Mind of Pure Land and Ch'an Buddhism," in *Self and Society in Ming Thought,* ed. William de Bary et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 451–479.
65. See *Shengyan Fashi yulu,* comp. and ed. Peng Shaosheng, in *Wanzi Xu Zanging,* Dai Nippon Zakujōkyū, 150 cases (Reprint; Taibei: Xinwenfeng chubangongsi, 1968–1970), 109:302a.
66. *Yingxiang ji,* 341a.
67. *He Xiangu shunnei wen* (Shanghai: Dazhong shuju, preface dated 1857).

THE POLITICAL SPHERE

Painting, Architecture, and Music

5

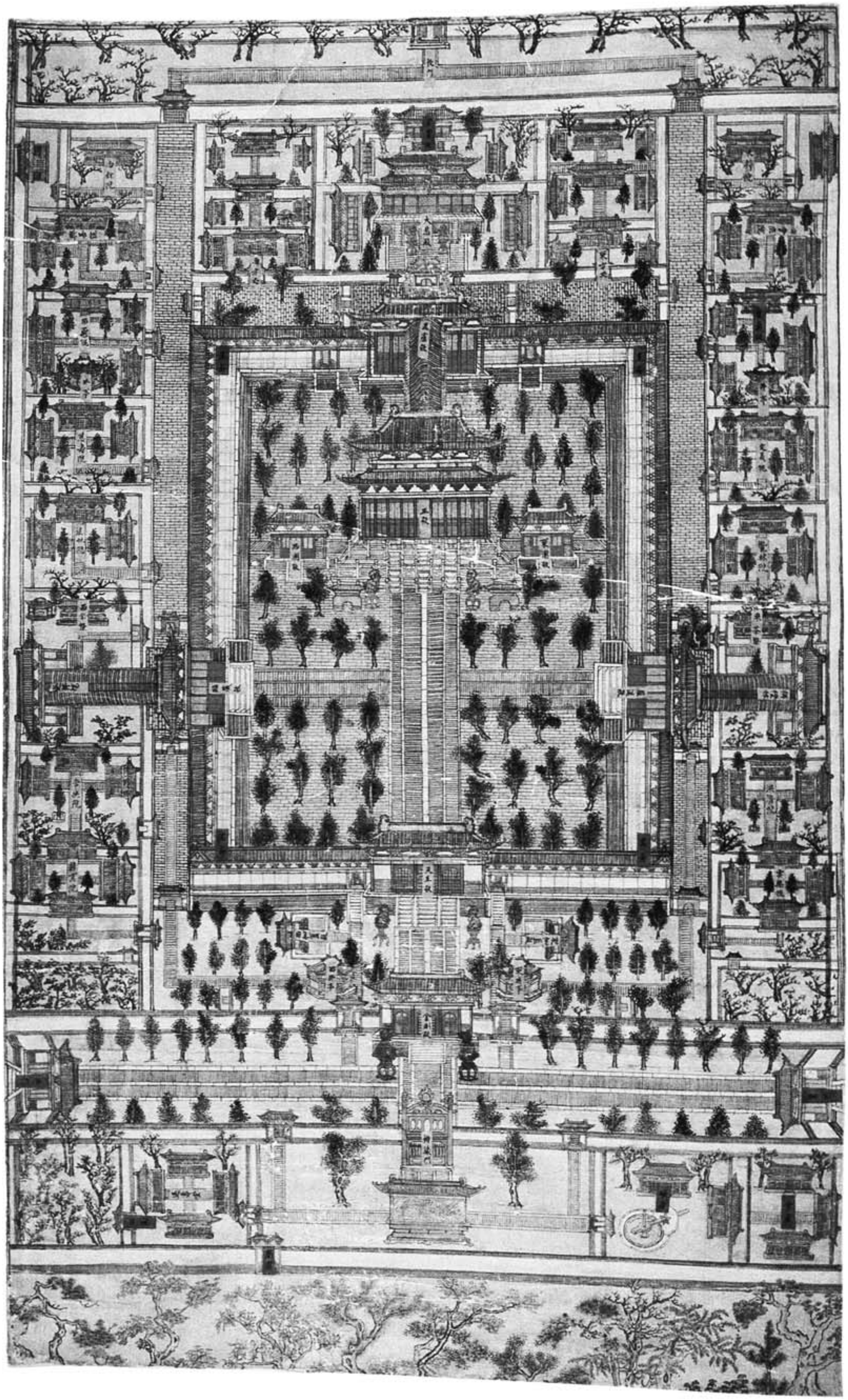
Imperial Engagements with Buddhist Art and Architecture: Ming Variations on an Old Theme

Marsha Weidner

ALTHOUGH CONSTRAINED by imperial edicts, subject to bureaucratic controls, the target of harsh criticism from Confucian officials, and in constant competition with other systems of belief, Buddhism still flourished in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). In one form or another, the religion attracted believers from all segments of Ming society—elite and nonelite, male and female, ethnic Chinese and non-Chinese. Whatever judgments may be passed on its spirituality, doctrinal rigor, and institutional purity in comparison to the Buddhism of earlier ages, Ming Buddhism was a major social force, buoyed by imperial patronage early in the period and by both imperial patronage and a resurgence of gentry support toward the end of the dynasty.[1] Buddhist art and architecture thus continued to be, as they had been for centuries, vehicles for a wide range of cultural transactions, social and political as well as spiritual and aesthetic. This essay examines a selection of such transactions involving members of the Ming imperial family and court: emperors, empresses, princes, eunuchs, and high-ranking clerics who responded directly to the throne.

The Ming court pattern of engagement with Buddhism broadly resembled that of earlier dynasties. At times the imperial household vigorously patronized the religion and at times rejected it in favor of indigenous beliefs.[2] Concerned about the wealth, relative independence, and local power of the Buddhist monasteries, the court early on imposed restrictions on them and created bureaucratic structures to oversee the clergy.[3] Yet the emperors continued to call on Buddhist monks for ritual support of the state, protection against external enemies, and invocation of divine assistance to control the forces of nature.[4] Female members of the Ming imperial family, like imperial women of the past, were often devoted patrons of the faith, two notable examples being the Empress Dowager Zhou (Shengci renshou; 1430–1504) and Empress Dowager Li (Cisheng; 1546–1614).[5] And Buddhism continued to serve the ancestor cult on all levels of society, with the imperial house leading the way by sponsoring grand, merit-producing rites for the benefit of imperial ancestors and all souls.

Buddhism, its institutions and personnel, also remained useful in the conduct of foreign affairs. The Ming court received embassies led by foreign monks and, in turn, used monks as emissaries to Buddhist lands. Along with these missions went exchanges of precious Buddhist objects.[6] At home, the court—its official Confucian character notwithstanding—likewise



appreciated the historically validated potential of religious institutions to function as channels of communication with the countryside. Buddhist monasteries, like the administrative bureaucracy, were spread over China's vast terrain; but unlike the intimidating government offices, with their fearsome courts of law, the monasteries were welcoming places that served a variety of public functions and were open to everyone. As public spaces and centers of education and entertainment, Buddhist monasteries might be compared to modern museums, libraries, and parks. The same was, of course, true of temples devoted to Daoism, Confucianism, and other beliefs. As multifunctional complexes, which might boast connections with the courts of a succession of dynasties, monasteries were potent institutional transmitters of imperial culture, a cornerstone of imperial power. By bestowing buildings, icons, plaques, steles, and sutras upon Buddhist monasteries, the court not only accumulated religious merit, but also linked the magnificence of the church and state, giving people remote from the capital glimpses of imperial majesty and building cultural capital on the local level. The people presumably repaid such imperial largesse with loyalty and prayers for the well-being of the nation and its rulers.[7] Thus, although not partaking directly of the political power of the court, monasteries affirmed the court's cultural authority. In this regard, they were especially important in border regions and at sacred sites.

The means of affirming this cultural authority were to a large extent visual. Buddhist monasteries employed the language of Chinese imperial visual culture, with its carefully crafted architectural assertions of dominion over the five directions and the constituent elements of the universe.[8] Edward Schafer's description of the Tang capital Chang'an might apply equally well to most large urban monasteries, such as the early-Ming Chongshan Monastery in Taiyuan (fig. 5.1):

> It was laid out in beautiful symmetry—a model of the land of the gods, a paradise on earth. The city was structured in accordance with the divine plan, in the form of a rectangle oriented according to the cardinal directions. It was subdivided into smaller squares by its grid of streets, the major ones leading to ceremonial gateways. . . . The gateways faced the four sacred mountains, the most important of them opening toward the south, the holy direction symbolized by *yang,* red and summer—the special direction of the Son of Heaven himself.[9]

Monasteries were also decorated with palatial opulence and furnished with paintings in courtly styles. The casting of Buddhist sacred precincts in this distinctive Han Chinese mode was, of course, from its inception part of the process of naturalizing the Indian religion and establishing its place in the Chinese hierarchy of belief. At the same time, this sinicization represented a social investment in and political manipulation of the religion on the part of China's ruling class. Whether directly supported by the imperial household or not, Buddhist monasteries visually echoed the imperial capital, the historical locus of divinely sanctioned power. With their formal axial plans and glazed-tile roofs rising behind red walls, monasteries belonged to an aesthetic network that radiated out from China's capitals to reach its most rugged frontiers.

Figure 5.1 Map of the Chongshan Monastery in the Ming dynasty. From *A Panorama of Ancient Chinese Architecture in Shanxi (Shanxi gu jianzhu tonglan),* ed. Li Yuming (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1986), 20.

Mount Wutai and other sacred Buddhist mountains, places of wilderness retreat and abodes of foreign and indigenous gods, were, in effect, colonized by palatial monasteries, the worldliness of which firmly tied them to China's elite secular culture. The splendor of some of these establishments rivaled that of the imperial palace itself. Mindful of the very real threat implicit in this imitation, imperial households were at pains to exert their authority over these institutions, not only through laws and bureaucratic agencies, but also in more subtle ways such as making presentations to them designed to display the coincidence of imperial and religious concern for the protection of the nation and welfare of its people. In monasteries such as the ones considered in this study—Fahai Monastery in Beijing, Chongshan Monastery in Taiyuan, Xiantong Monastery on Mount Wutai, and Qutan Monastery in Ledu, Qinghai province—imperial signs are everywhere, in edict steles, great bronze bells, name tablets over doorways, and portrayals of Buddhist deities in the guises of Chinese emperors, empresses, their officials and attendants.

While such broad patterns of imperial patronage were maintained in the Ming, the engagement of the Ming court with Buddhism had its own flavor, which shifted and changed over the course of the dynasty. Factors contributing to this kaleidoscopic variation included the personal religious convictions of individual emperors, influence from powerful eunuchs and imperial women, interaction with neighboring Buddhist countries—Tibet, Mongolia, Korea, and Japan—and developments within Chinese religion broadly, notably, increased syncretism and, as noted in Daniel Stevenson's chapter, emphasis on ritual performance.

This essay sketches Ming imperial involvement with Buddhist art and architecture, the integration of Buddhist and imperial concerns, and the employment of imperial visual culture in Buddhist contexts. It ventures into aesthetic, cultural, and physical terrain largely uncharted in standard accounts of Chinese art[10] and suggests how imperial concern with specific monasteries extended the cultural and aesthetic hegemony of the court into politically sensitive border regions. In contrast to the scholarly painting tradition rooted in the wealthy cities of the southeast, the Buddhist cultural trail, especially when marked by court patronage, leads out to the northern and western frontiers just as insistently as it does into the political capitals and the southeastern heartland of literati culture. To demonstrate this reach, the following discussion proceeds geographically. It begins in the Ming capitals of Nanjing and Beijing, then moves west to Shanxi, to arrive finally in Qinghai province, within the Tibetan Buddhist cultural sphere. The view offered is highly selective, designed only to suggest the range of imperial engagement with Buddhist aesthetic culture, not to survey it in all of its geographic, ethnic, and sectarian diversity.

Views from the Center

Zhu Di, the Yongle emperor (1360–1424; r. 1403–1424), was one of several Ming rulers to become deeply involved with Buddhism, often marrying personal belief with political expediency. This involvement included patronizing the clergy, restoring monasteries, making images, and publishing scriptures.[11] Like the emperors of the preceding Yuan dynasty, the Yongle emperor was particularly drawn to Tibetan Buddhism and invited famous lamas to his court, where they were treated with courtesy and presented with lavish gifts.[12] As discussed by Patricia Berger in the next chapter, one of the most notable of lamas received by the Yongle emperor was Dezhin Shegpa (1384–1415), or Helima (Halima) as he was known in Chinese,

a famous miracle worker of the Karmapa branch of the Kagyu order of Tibetan Buddhism. Dezhin Shegpa went to Nanjing in 1407 to conduct a grand Buddhist rite in honor of the emperor's father, Ming Taizu, and Empress Ma (whom Zhu Di claimed as his mother), and became the emperor's guru.[13]

This master-pupil relationship is illustrated by a well-known image thought to have originated in the eighteenth century in eastern Tibet (see fig. 6.5).[14] A Tibetan political viewpoint is evident here in the relative scale of the figures, the large Tibetan cleric on the left dwarfing the yellow-robed Chinese emperor, on the right. Immediately above the emperor is a vision of a Chinese monastery radiating light; golden clouds rise behind the buildings and cranes fly above. As Berger observes, this is not a generic temple, but a real place, Linggu Monastery outside Nanjing, where Dezhin Shegpa conducted his spectacular mortuary mass. During the Tibetan cleric's stay, miracles steadily occurred at Linggu Monastery, such as unnatural radiance and the appearance of cranes, as shown in this image.[15]

The pictorial source for this wondrous architectural image was most likely a handscroll produced at the Ming court, a version of which was preserved over the centuries at the principal Karmapa monastery, Tsurphu, some fifty miles west of Lhasa (see figs. 6.1–6.4). This scroll, which is treated in detail in Berger's essay, documents in pictures and text the miracles that accompanied Dezhin Shegpa's activities in Nanjing. A large painting (66 cm high and more than 49 m long) done in fine brushwork and brilliant color on silk, it meticulously depicts such extraordinary events as the appearance of auspicious five-colored clouds in the shape of *ruyi* ("as-you-wish") scepters, lohans descending on auspicious clouds, radiant light emitted from the relic pagoda with the brilliance of a newly risen moon, cranes that danced as they flew, unusual radiance of the sun, and so on. These manifestations testified to the power of both the emperor and his guru and served a legitimizing tool for the emperor's problematic succession to the throne. The scroll's multilingual (Chinese, Tibetan, Mongolian, Arabic, and Uighur) inscriptions indicate the international scope of this propaganda. As Berger demonstrates, by the time this scroll was produced, the depiction of portentous and auspicious events was an ancient Chinese tradition.[16]

Another such work done for the Yongle emperor is mentioned in the *Qingliang shan zhi* (Gazetteer of Mount Qingliang), a late-Ming topographical history of Mount Wutai. An entry dated to the spring of 1420 quotes a preface in which the emperor tells of compiling the *Gequ ming jing,* a book of names of buddhas, bodhisattvas, and divine monks collected so that people might chant them and sing their praises. According to this preface, the presentation of the book to Great Xiantong Monastery on Mount Wutai was accompanied by an array of miracles:

> An auspicious light brilliantly issued forth, a five-colored radiance rising to illuminate the sky, covering the mountains and valleys, filling and spreading, with the brilliance of the sun and stars, lasting and not dissipating. Then Manjushri riding on a lion faintly emerged from the edge of the clouds, slightly revealing traces of his form. When the clouds and mist collected, you could see the lion displaying his whiskers and sticking out his tongue, raising his legs and moving his feet, prancing and dancing for joy, looking to the left and right, halting and standing on the mountain. The next day lohans came from Huayan Peak, some five hundred, some three hundred, some one or two hundred, one after the other,

> treading on each other's heels, soaring in close succession. Among them were those carrying bundles of sutras on their heads, those who leaned on monks' staffs, those who were nude, those who had bare shoulders, those who were barefooted, those who were lame and hunchbacked. The group reached more than three thousand, manifesting and disappearing; the transformations were extraordinary. People who had traveled to Wutai from everywhere all bowed and sang in praise, regarding this as a rare event.

The emperor goes on to say that he governs the world with the greatest sincerity, taking the instruction of the people as his duty. Wherever scriptures arrive, awareness and profound understanding are obtained, as was more than adequately demonstrated by the revelations on Mount Wutai. He ordered artisans to paint a picture (presumably a pictorial record) and reproduce the "songs" *(gequ)* to connect to it.[17]

Pictorial records of miracles, religious message aside, were a variation on didactic history painting and functioned in much the same way. Scrolls documenting supernatural sanctions of the Yongle emperor's Buddhist activities can be broadly compared to, for instance, *The Imperial Procession to the Ming Mausoleums,* a pair of large, anonymous sixteenth-century handscrolls in the collection of the National Palace Museum.[18] One of these scrolls provides a particularly apt comparison as it includes a view of the imperial palace in a sea of clouds with auspicious cranes overhead. Like such celebrations of the state cult, paintings of imperially sponsored Buddhist events were intended to mold perceptions of an emperor and his reign. Only their audiences differed, as suggested by the multilingual inscriptions on the scroll depicting the miracles that attended the visit of the Tibetan hierarch.

Most of the surviving religious painting of the Ming period was produced by unidentified or little-known artists, but leading court masters also treated Buddhist and Daoist subjects. Some specialized in these themes; others included them in larger repertories of subject matter.[19] One of the foremost specialists was Jiang Zicheng, who was summoned to the capital in the Yongle period. An accomplished painter of landscapes and figures, skilled in the application of color, he is said to have repented his way of life in middle age and turned his brush to Buddhist images. He was especially good at ink-monochrome portrayals of the bodhisattva Guanyin. Indicative of his prominence is the identification of his figure painting as one of the "Three Perfections of the Forbidden City," the other two being Zhao Lian's tiger painting and Bian Wenjin's "feathers and fur" (bird and animal pictures). Of particular interest in connection with the scrolls discussed above is a record that Jiang was ordered to paint a real event (or events) for presentation to a foreign country.[20] Given his period of activity, reputation, and range of skills, we might wonder if he was involved in the pictorial recording of Dezhin Shegpa's miracles.

None of Jiang Zicheng's paintings of Buddhist deities seem to have survived, but some may have resembled an unsigned Daoist picture in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (fig. 5.2).[21] This picture is associated with Jiang primarily by virtue of its subject, the Generalissimo of Wen, one of the gods of the Chinese cyclical system of counting years and a marshal of the Daoist Jade Emperor. Jiang Zicheng was reportedly the first to label the deity in the manner seen here, with a tablet reading "Unrestrained by the Milky Way."[22] A Ming work presumably in his tradition, the Boston painting employs the vigorous sculptural style of the celebrated Tang-dynasty muralist Wu Daozi, and in this regard resembles many religious scroll

and wall paintings of the period. This antique style, in addition to being well suited to the subject matter, was favored as an evocation of a glorious period in the history of China, Chinese Buddhism, and Chinese religious art.

For the court master Shang Xi (active ca. 1425–1450) religious subjects were part of a diverse oeuvre. He also painted landscapes, secular figures, flowers, birds, and animals. Skilled at large-scale works, he was credited with now-lost (?) murals at Sheng'an Monastery in Beijing.[23] We are left to speculate about Shang Xi's works of this type on basis of a few scrolls attributed to him that are comparable to temple murals in subject and scale. One such work is *Four Immortals Honoring the God of Longevity,* a hanging scroll done in ink and colors on silk (fig. 5.3). This large picture (98.3 cm. x 143.8 cm.) was probably originally mounted as a standing screen and thus functioned much like a wall painting.[24] Given its size and subject matter, deities riding across waves, it might be compared to the midfourteenth-century (1358) mural of *The Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea* painted over the lintel of the rear door of the Chunyang Hall at the Daoist temple Yongle gong in Shanxi.[25] The aptness of this comparison and the current title of the painting attributed to Shang Xi notwithstanding, the subject of this picture is not exclusively Daoist. Rather, it combines personalities drawn from Buddhism, Daoism, and popular belief and thus represents the religious syncretism prevalent in the Ming and supported by the Ming court.[26] The small figure riding on a crane at the top of this picture is the god of longevity. The two large figures to the right are the Daoist personalities Li Tieguai, the Iron Crutch Immortal, and the immortal with the three-legged toad, perhaps Liu Haichan. The two figures on the left side are the eccentric Buddhist sage poets Hanshan and Shide, Tang-dynasty personalities associated with Guoqing Monastery on Mount Tiantai. Hanshan is identified by the empty scroll he holds, Shide by the broom he rides across the water. The Tang dynasty is also evoked here by stylistic reference to the art of Wu Daozi, although in this case the tradition has been filtered through the manner of the thirteenth-century artist Yan Hui.[27]



Figure 5.2 Attributed to Jiang Zicheng, *The Generalissimo of Wen (The Daoist Deity Wenyuan shuai).* Ming dynasty. Hanging scroll (mounted as a panel), ink and color on silk, 124 x 66.1 cm. Fenollosa-Weld Collection, 1911. Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Similarly comparable to monastery murals of the period is another large work credited to Shang Xi, a heroic depiction of the Three Kingdoms–period general Guan Yu capturing



Figure 5.3 Attributed to Shang Xi, *Four Immortals Honoring the God of Longevity.* Ming dynasty. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 98.3 x 143.8 cm. Collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.

his rival Pang De (fig. 5.4).[28] Guan Yu was a figure of enormous popularity, celebrated in the Ming novel *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and worshiped as Emperor Guan, the God of War, in temples throughout China. Today a favorite of Chinese businessmen, in the Ming he was the subject of a state cult, and, because his legend came to include an account of his posthumous conversion to Buddhism, he came to be represented in Buddhist monasteries.[29] He appears, for instance, as a monastery guardian at Shuanglin Monastery outside Taiyuan, where his chapel is next door to one occupied by the Sixteen Lohans.[30] Shang Xi's picture offers a theatrical rendering appropriate to its subject and scale. Guan Yu and his lieutenants are heavy, animated figures dressed in brightly colored military garb with fluttering hems, sleeves, and bands similar to the costume worn by the Generalissimo of Wen in the painting associated with Jiang Zicheng. Substantial and arrogant, Guan Yu has the bearing of an emperor. In fact, it has been pointed out that this image resembles portraits of the Yongle and other Ming rulers.[31] So, in effect, we have an imperially commissioned cult image that combines religious mural painting traditions with elements of heroic imperial portraiture.

The imposition of imperial imagery, or its appropriation, depending on your point of view, is commonplace in Chinese Buddhist art. It is exemplified by the treatment routinely given the figures of Brahma, Indra, and the spirit guardians of the Dharma in paintings such as those on the walls of the main hall, the Daxiong baodian (Precious Hall of the Great Hero, i.e., Shakyamuni), at Fahai Monastery in the western suburbs of Beijing. Originally Longquan Monastery, it was rebuilt as Fahai Monastery in the midfifteenth century (1439–1443) under the direction of Li Tong, a eunuch in the Directorate of Imperial Accoutrements. (A portrait statue of Li Tong as donor stood in the hall until the Cultural Revolution, when all the sculpture—the Buddhas of the Three Generations, Mahakala, and the Eighteen Lohans—was destroyed.) Emperor Yingzong (Zhu Qizhen, r. 1436–1445, 1457–1464) presented the horizontal

name plaque reading "Fahai Chan si" (Sea of the Law Chan Monastery), and a team of court artists, named in a stele still standing at the temple, executed the celebrated murals.[32] The images of Brahma and Indra are found on the rear (north) wall of the main hall, flanking the door, Brahma and his entourage to the right (fig. 5.5), Indra and company to the left. These deities are portrayed as Chinese royal figures, and were it not for some of the decidedly un-Chinese gods following them, such as the multiarmed figures of Sravasti and Marici, these scenes might be mistaken for imperial donor processions like those from the Binyang cave at Longmen.[33] Not only are China's temporal rulers flatteringly equated with the gods in these murals, but imperial taste also prevails elsewhere in the decoration of the hall. The landscape, flower, and animal motifs painted on the side walls and the back of the altar screen evoke palace gardens and imperial pleasure parks and resemble secular paintings of these subjects made to decorate palace halls.[34]

The Fahai Monastery murals have been compared to a well-known set of *shuilu* (water and land) ritual paintings produced for the court in 1454. The court's taste for opulence and its power to command the finest materials and most accomplished artists are evident in the refined drawing, exquisite costume details, and abundant use of expensive pigments and gold in these pictures. Thirty-four scrolls from the set are now in the Museé Guimet; two are in



Figure 5.4 Attributed to Shang Xi, *General Guan Yu Capturing Pang De.* Ming dynasty. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 200 x 237 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing. From *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Huihua bian, Mingdai huihua, shang* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1988), 81.



Figure 5.5 Wan Fuqing, Wang Shu, and others, *Brahma and Attendants.* Mural on the north wall of the main hall, Fahai Monastery, Beijing. Ming dynasty, 1439–1444. From *Fahai si bihua* (Beijing: China Travel and Tourism Press, 1993), pl. 85.

the Cleveland Museum of Art; and one, an image of the Buddha Vairocana, was recently acquired by the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas (fig. 5.6).[35] An inscription in the lower left corner of each scroll states that it was made on imperial order and under the supervision of the Director of the Directorate of Imperial Accoutrements Shang Yi, Wang Qin, and others. As suggested by these inscriptions, as well as by the history of Fahai Monastery and that of Zhihua Monastery discussed by Kenneth Hammond in this volume, eunuchs were major players in the drama of Ming court involvement with Buddhist monasteries and their art. They were in charge of craft agencies responsible for the production of Buddhist art in various mediums; they served as court emissaries to the great temples; and, as in the case of the Fahai, Zhihua, and numerous other monasteries, they were patrons themselves.[36] In their support of Buddhism and dispatch of court-ordered Buddhist missions, the eunuchs stood in direct opposition to the court officials who criticized the religion and tried to minimize the imperial household's involvement with it.[37]

The *shuilu* ritual, discussed at length by Daniel Stevenson in chapter 2, is a Buddhist ceremony conducted for the salvation of the innumerable beings inhabiting water and land, but especially the ancestors of the sponsors of the rite. The 1454 scrolls were presumably employed in ceremonies held for the benefit of the imperial ancestors. Over the seven-day course of the rite, all manner of deities and beings are invoked at altars placed before their images in the

ritual arena. The places of honor go, of course, to the buddhas, bodhisattvas, *vidya-raja* (C. *mingwang*), lohans, and other deities at the top of the Buddhist pantheon. The lower positions are occupied by beings trapped in the realm of samsara: celestial gods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and beings in hell. By the Ming, the scale of this rite had grown to enormous proportions with a huge number of beings invoked. Reflecting the syncretic character of Ming religion, the assembly included all manner of gods and personalities, Daoist and popular divinities, as well as notables from the past—filial sons, eminent women, monks and nuns, generals who gave their lives for their country, emperors, empresses, princes, and so on—until the walls are more than half filled with Chinese figures, many in imperial or official



Figure 5.6 Artist unknown, *Vairocana.* Ming dynasty, 1454. Hanging scroll, ink, color, and gold on silk. Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas. R. Charles and Mary Margaret Clevenger Fund and Helen Foresman Spencer Art Acquisition Fund.



Figure 5.7 Artist unknown, *Guanyin by a Lotus Pond.* Ming dynasty, 1593. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 181.6 x 114.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Rogers Fund, 1918 (18.139.2). Photograph ©1989 The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

costumes.[38] These aristocratic Chinese figures not only appear in Buddhist ritual paintings made for court, but also in monasteries across the country in scroll sets, such as the one made for Baoning Monastery outside Datong in Shanxi, and in murals like those in the rear hall of Pilu Monastery in Shijiazhuang, Hebei.[39]

As another example of the secular, courtly cast given to some of the Buddhist imagery made for the Ming ruling house, we can take a painting of Guanyin (fig. 5.7) apparently done for the Wanli-period (1573–1619) Empress Dowager Li. Her seal appears just below the clouds on the upper left edge; infrared photography has revealed a date corresponding to 1593. Like the paintings on silk attributed to Shang Xi, this large work is readily compared to a mural. Guanyin is shown seated in a palatial garden that might be a corner of a summer palace like the Yihe yuan in Beijing or one of its predecessors. Framed by clouds of two colors, an ornamental garden rock, tree peonies, and bamboo, and accompanied by a white parrot, the bodhisattva leans on an ornate balustrade and gazes down to a pool filled with pink and white lotus flowers, nine in full flower.[40] There the boy-pilgrim Sudhana (C. Shancai) stands in a posture of adoration on a lotus leaf. At least since the Song dynasty, Buddhist deities, such as the lohans and the kings of hell, had been portrayed in similar settings, but in this case, it is tempting to relate the interpretation of the subject to the patron, noting that Guanyin, a deity beloved by women, is portrayed in a palace garden in a painting done for a palace woman. This particular conflation of court and Buddhist imagery, however, was not directed to just a court audience; rather, it became a public iconography. Four years earlier, in 1589, on imperial order, virtually the same composition had been carved on a stone set up at Sheng'an Monastery in Beijing, where, incidentally, Shang Xi is said to have painted murals.[41]

Empress Dowager Li's support of Buddhism, like that of the Yongle emperor and many other members of the imperial family, reached far beyond the capital. She had a significant influence on, for instance, the sacred abode of the bodhisattva Manjushri, Mount Wutai in Shanxi province.

Westward to Shanxi and Qinghai

The monasteries of Mount Wutai, especially Great Xiantong Monastery in the central town of Taihuai, were magnets for imperial largesse from early times. According to tradition, the origins of the monastery reach back to the reign of Han emperor Ming (r. 58–75), when it was called Dafu lingjiu (Great Belief Numinous Vulture [Peak]) Monastery, as Mount Wutai was held to resemble Vulture Peak in India. The Northern Wei emperor Xiaowen (r. 471–499) rebuilt (some say founded) it as a huge establishment encircling the peak, with twelve courtyards and a flower garden in front. Thus it was also called Huayuan (Flower Garden) Monastery. Tang Taizong (r. 627–649) restored it, and Empress Wu (624–705), finding the name of the mountain in a new translation of the Huayan (Avatamsaka) Sutra, renamed the monastery Great Huayan Monastery. The Ming brought a new infusion of imperial support, and, on the site of the former Huayan Monastery, three new establishments arose: Great Xiantong Monastery, Pagoda Cloister (Ta yuan) Monastery, and Bodhisattva Peak (Pusading) Monastery. Ming Taizu (r. 1368–1398) undertook the building of the first and presented the

name plaque. The monastery was subsequently protected and maintained by imperial order. In 1405, the third year of Yongle, it was designated the Prefectural Buddhist Registry and charged with overseeing all the monks on the mountain.[42] By imperial order, the monastery was refurbished under the supervision of the court eunuch Yang Sheng for the visit of the Dezhin Shegpa to the mountain in 1407.[43] Shakya Yeshe (C. Shijia Yeshi; 1355–1435), who traveled from Tibet to China in place of his famous teacher Tsongkhapa and was honored by the Yongle and Xuande emperors, spent time at the monastery in 1416.[44]

Empress Dowager Li was responsible for yet another rebuilding of Xiantong Monastery. For this enterprise she employed the celebrated monk and master builder Fudeng (1540–1613), also known as Miaofeng, whom she patronized for some thirty years.[45] Their relationship began when Fudeng and the celebrated cleric Hanshan Deqing (1546–1623) convened a grand assembly devoted to the Huayan Sutra, beginning late in 1581 and lasting 120 days, at Pagoda Cloister Monastery, which had just been rebuilt at the empress dowager's order. She sent an official to ask the monks to pray for the birth of an imperial heir at this meeting, and, of course, they did. When the heir (Zhu Changluo) was born in August of 1582, the empress dowager rewarded Fudeng by inviting him to build a great Huayan monastery and seven-story iron pagoda on Mount Luya, Shanxi, where he had taken up residence to pursue his religious practice. According to his modern biographer Else Glahn, "from that moment the imperial treasury was open to any temple building that [Fudeng] might propose." Subsequently Fudeng traveled widely, becoming famous as a builder of bridges as well as Buddhist structures.[46] He is known particularly for his imitations of wooden structures in more durable materials, brick and bronze. Fine examples of both remain at Great Xiantong Monastery.

The bronze hall at Xiantong Monastery was a product of Fudeng's plan to house images of the great bodhisattvas on their respective mountains: Samantabhadra on Mount Emei, Guanyin on Mount Putuo (Mount Baohua in Jiangsu province was substituted when the monks of Putuo opposed the project), and Manjushri on Mount Wutai. The work on Mount Emei was initiated and sponsored by Zhu Xiaoyong, the Prince of Shen at Lu'an in Shanxi; Empress Dowager Li supported the work at Mount Baohua. When the bronze hall was set up at Xiantong Monastery in 1605, she and the Wanli emperor dispatched eunuchs to request Fudeng to build new halls and enlarge the whole monastery with imperial funds.[47]

The little bronze hall (4.65 m. wide) dedicated to Manjushri, the visual culmination of Xiantong Monastery and the only one of Fudeng's three bronze halls to survive, is an exquisite integration of architecture, sculpture, and pictorial art (fig. 5.8). A balcony on the second level gives it the appearance of a two-story building. The lower level is divided into vertical panels with latticework designs on the top, to suggest windows, and low-relief compositions of auspicious birds, flowers, and animals (real and mythical) below. The latter recall court paintings of the same subjects. Cast on the interior walls are "ten thousand" small buddhas. Even more intricate bronze casting is evident in the two (of the original five) bronze pagodas standing before the hall. Flanking the bronze hall are two of Fudeng's "beamless" halls, vaulted masonry structures that, like the bronze hall, borrow their decorative vocabulary from timber construction, but do so through carved brick pilasters, railings, and brackets. A massive, two-story, beamless hall likewise adorned with *faux* bracketing, railings, and pilasters stands in front of the bronze hall, on the main axis of the monastery.[48] When the work at Xiantong Monastery was complete, the emperor renamed it Da huguo shengguang yongming (Great Protect the Nation, Holy Illumination, Eternal Brightness) Monastery and made

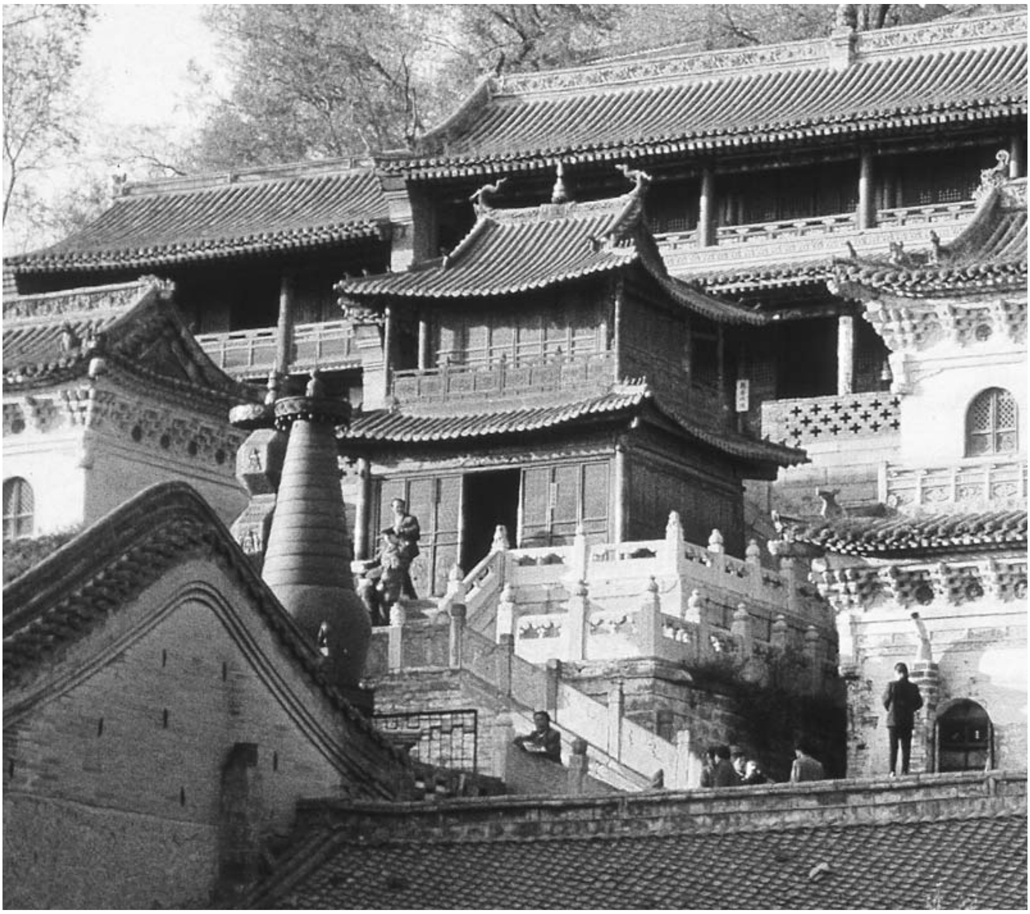


Figure 5.8 Bronze hall of Manjushri, Great Xiantong Monastery, Mount Wutai, Shanxi province. Ming dynasty. Photograph: Weidner.

Fudeng abbot, with the title Huguo Chanshi (Protection of the Nation Chan Master).[49]

As suggested by the record of the Prince of Shen's patronage of Fudeng's bronze hall and image on Mount Emei, the royal support the cleric enjoyed extended beyond the imperial court in Beijing to some of the Ming princes based in Shanxi. His earliest patron was Zhu Junzha, the Prince of Shanyin in Puzhou prefecture.[50] In 1608 the eleventh Prince of Jin, Zhu Min, invited Fudeng to his capital, Taiyuan, to rebuild Yongming Monastery, also known as Great Pagoda Monastery, and serve as its abbot. Although he was sixty-eight at the time, Fudeng accepted the invitation. He changed the monastery's name to Yongzuo (since Yongming was also part of the new name given to Xiantong Monastery on Mount Wutai) and proposed building a second pagoda to balance the slightly leaning original pagoda. The prince approved his proposal, and more financial support came from Empress Dowager Li. With its two pagodas, the monastery came to be popularly known as the Shuangta (Twin Pagodas) Monastery. Fudeng's program also included the still extant main hall, Hall of the Great Hero (Daxiong dian), Three Saints Pavilion (Sansheng ge), abbot's quarters, meditation hall, and guest reception hall, all constructed of blue-gray brick, again fashioned to resemble wooden structures. His original plan was grander,

 but his health began to fail. Before the monastery was completed, he returned to Xiantong Monastery on Mount Wutai, where he died shortly thereafter at the age of seventy-three.[51]

Ming princes and their courts were major sources of support for Buddhist monasteries, and, partly through the monasteries, contributed to the broad dissemination of imperial culture across the country. The cultural influence of the Ming princes is attributable in part to the fact that there were a great many of them. The first Ming emperor alone had twenty-six sons, seventeen of whom were sent to fiefs in strategic areas outside the capital.[52] Many were men of considerable secular and religious cultivation, having studied with leading scholars and been advised by learned monks. The monk Daoyan (1335–1418), better known as Yao Guangxiao, is a famous example of the latter. Summoned to court to participate in the funeral service for Empress Ma in 1382, Daoyan became a trusted adviser to Prince Zhu Di, who subsequently took the throne as the Yongle emperor. In addition to being a cleric, official, and military strategist, Daoyan was a poet and an influential figure in literary and religious circles. Monks visiting from Japan solicited prefaces or postscripts from him for their own writings.[53] He also wrote inscriptions on important works of art, and he is credited with at least two paintings.[54]

Among the first generation of princes, second only to Zhu Di in importance to the history of art was his elder brother Zhu Gang (1358–1398), who is well known as an art collector. His palace seals appear on numerous extant examples of painting and calligraphy, placed there either by the prince himself or by his descendants.[55] Zhu Gang was invested as Prince Gong of Jin in 1370 and eight years later went to his fief in central Shanxi.[56] The chapters on Buddhist monasteries and Daoist temples in the Shanxi gazetteers make frequent reference to him and other local princes. Of the monasteries sponsored by the princes of Jin, the jewel in the crown was surely Chongshan Monastery in Taiyuan built by Zhu Gang with the permission of the emperor. Construction of the monastery began in 1383. When it was completed in 1391, the prince bestowed a tablet reading "Chongshan Chan si" (Chongshan Chan Monastery) and allocated more than three hundred acres for its support—to keep the incense and offering lamps burning in perpetuity.[57] The monastery's place in the state-imposed hierarchy of religious institutions is indicated by its designation as the Prefectural Buddhist Registry.[58] Today the headquarters of the Shanxi Provincial Buddhist Association, Chongshan Monastery remains an important religious center, but, in terms of area and buildings, it is only a fragment of what it was in the Ming.

Most of the monastery was destroyed by fire in 1864. We know the magnitude of the loss from records in gazetteers, a detailed site map (see fig. 5.1), and two albums of paintings. Extending about 550 yards south to north and about 275 yards east to west, the monastery occupied more than thirty acres.[59] Six halls were aligned on the central axis: the Vajra Hall, Hall of the Heavenly Kings, the main hall *(zheng dian),* Vairocana Hall, Great Compassion (Thousand-hand, Thousand-eye Guanyin) Hall, and Golden Spirit Hall.[60] The last, Golden Spirit Hall, was an ancestral shrine, though actually more a shrine to the living as it was devoted to the prince's father, Ming Taizu (Zhu Yuanzhang), who did not die until 1398. Zhu Gang's motives for constructing Chongshan Monastery are thought to have been a mix of filial love and political expediency. The ostensible impetus for building the monastery was the death of Empress Ma in 1382. When she died, the emperor, out of concern for national security, did not permit his sons to leave their fiefs to attend her state funeral in Nanjing. So, the following year, to honor his mother, Zhu Gang began to raise Chongshan Monastery on the foundation

of an old temple in his own capital. Apparently, at the time he did not enjoy his father's favor to the same extent as some of his brothers. It has been suggested that building a monastery to repay the benevolence of his mother and including within it an ancestral shrine, something customary in Buddhist monasteries, was a means of winning his father's favor.[61]

At the heart of the monastery was a cloistered quadrangle entered on the south through the Hall of Heavenly Kings. Set into the east side of the cloister was the Lohan Hall, which was balanced on the west by the Revolving Sutra [cabinet] Hall. A straight path through the courtyard connected the Hall of Heavenly Kings with the main hall. Raised on a high, stepped platform and surrounded by two levels of marble balustrades, this was an imposing nine-bay structure with double eaves and a hip-and-gable roof. It was connected by a covered walkway to the Vairocana Hall set into the rear of the compound. The Great Compassion Hall occupied its own, more modest compound immediately behind the Vairocana Hall. As noted earlier, the plan closely resembled that of a traditional Chinese palace, with its axial symmetry, multiple courtyards, hierarchical arrangement of buildings, and a walled central precinct constituting the ceremonial heart of the compound.

All that remains today is the rear compound of the Great Compassion Hall.[62] This seven-bay by four-bay hall, with its two-stage, hip-and-gable, green-glazed tile roof, is recognized as a gem of Ming palace-style architecture. The interior is dominated by three large (more than twenty-seven feet high) gilded-clay images—the Thousand-hand, Thousand-eye Guanyin; the Thousand-hand, Thousand-begging-bowl Manjushri, and Samantabhadra—



Figure 5.9
Interior, Hall of Great Compassion (Dabei dian). Chongshan Monastery, Taiyuan, Shanxi province. Ming dynasty. From Zhang Jizhong and An Ji, eds., *Taiyuan Chongshan si wenwu tulu* (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1987), pl. 23.



Figure 5.10 Artist unknown, *The Life of Shakyamuni,* scene 28: *Joys of the Five Desires in the Prince's Palace.* Chongshan Monastery, Taiyuan, Shanxi province. Ming dynasty, 1483. Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 37 x 51 cm. (album measurements). From Zhang Jishong and An Ji, eds., *Taiyuan Chongshan si wenwu tulu.*

considered representative works of early-Ming esoteric Buddhist sculpture (fig. 5.9). The platform upon which they stand is decorated with molded glazed tiles, an art for which Shanxi province is known. The wooden "seven-dragon" offering tables—the dragons carved in the front panels of each—are contemporary with the building and images. What is now the main gate to the compound (originally the gate between the Vairocana and Great Compassion halls) also dates to the early Ming, as do its iron lion guardians. The bell hanging before the hall was cast in the first year of the Zhengde period (1506).[63] This comparatively small compound, with its complement of Ming art and architecture and steady beat of religious practice, affords a rare, if drastically scaled back, glimpse of the richness of the aesthetic culture of Ming monasteries in their heyday.[64]

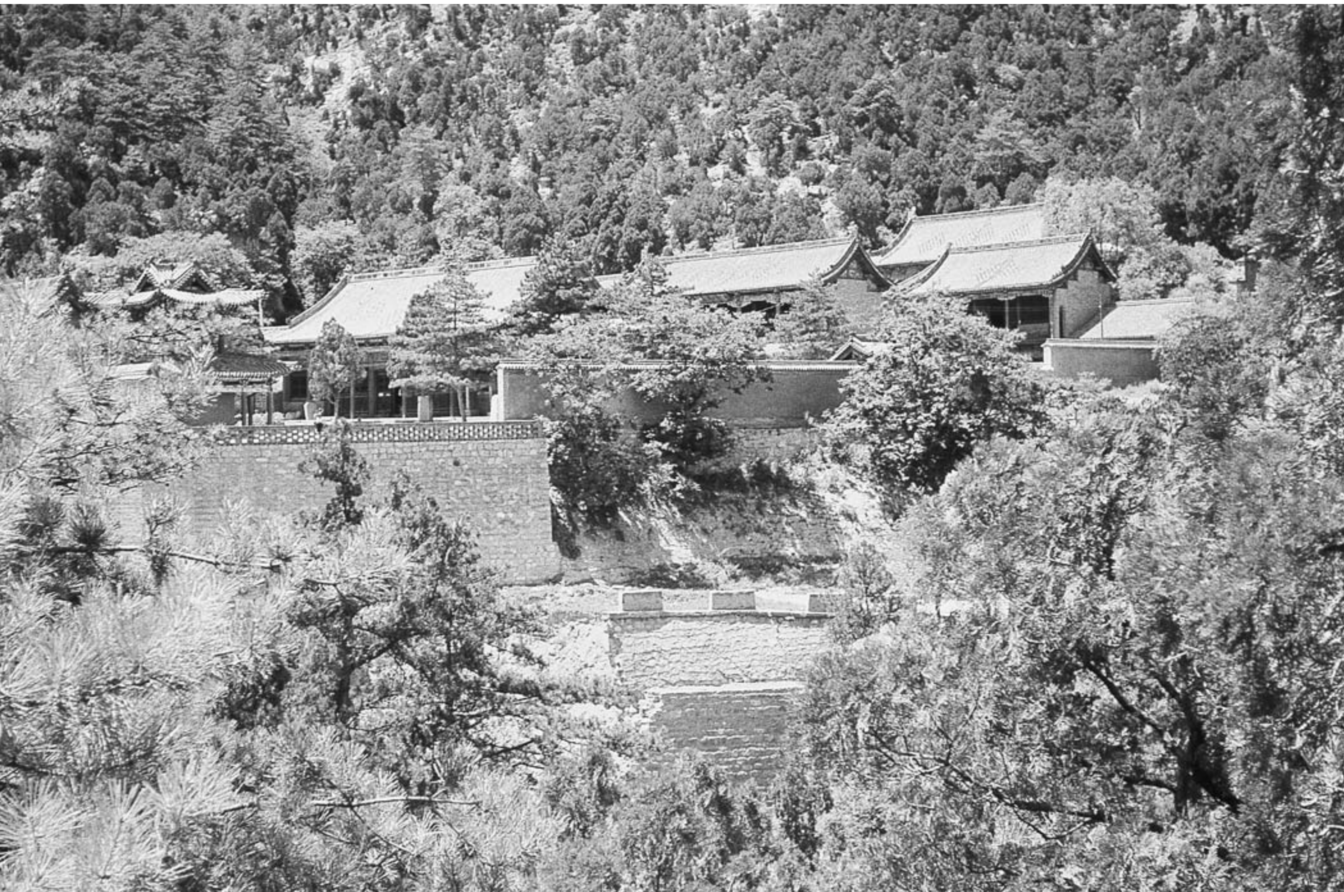
Two albums of paintings kept at the monastery afford another glimpse. The album leaves purport to be small-scale reproductions of the murals that once adorned the interior walls of the cloister galleries surrounding the main hall; they were, of course, lost along with this part of the monastery in the fire of 1864. One album illustrates the life of Shakyamuni in eighty-four episodes; the other records the pilgrimage of Sudhana in fifty-four scenes.[65] These paintings were apparently made when the monastery was restored in the sixteenth year of the Chenghua period (1480).[66] Both have prefaces dated 1483 written by Zhu Gang's great-grandson Prince Zhuang (Zhu Zhongxuan), who was Prince of Jin from 1441 to 1502, and are marked with the seals of the palace of the Prince of Jin.[67]

Painted in brilliant colors and gold on silk, these pictures are remarkably fresh. Like many

murals of the period, especially narrative cycles, they smoothly integrate Buddhist iconography and secular court styles of figure and landscape painting. As characterized in this pictorial narrative, Shakyamuni's childhood and boyhood home were those of a Ming prince. Most of the early scenes are set in Chinese gardens and pavilions, many furnished with ink landscape paintings mounted on standing screens. The young prince wears a red silk robe with delicate golden designs on the chest and shoulders. Chinese officials, generals, and palace ladies, including a band of musicians, attend him (fig. 5.10). When he ventures out of the palace, he rides his fine horse before Chinese city walls.

The life of Shakyamuni was a common subject on the walls of Ming monasteries, paralleled by similar biographical narrative paintings in Daoist temples.[68] Ming illustrations of Shakyamuni's biography remain on walls at Jueyuan Monastery in Sichuan, Qutan Monastery in Qinghai, and Duofu Monastery (fig. 5.11) outside Taiyuan in Shanxi.[69] Those at the Qutan and Duofu monasteries share with Chongshan Monastery album a thorough dependence on Chinese court painting traditions.[70] The close relationship between the Chongshan Monastery album and the Duofu Monastery murals would be expected given the proximity of these institutions. The latter stands high on Mount Juewei, overlooking the Taiyuan basin, about eighteen kilometers northwest of Taiyuan city. This scenic spot is famous for its autumn colors and remembered as a retreat of the artist, poet, and physician Fu Shan (1607–1684), who resided near the Twin Pagodas Monastery southeast of the city. Originally built in the eighth century and destroyed by warfare in the Song, Duofu Monastery was rebuilt on the old foundations in the Hongwu period (1368–1398).[71] According to a stele at the monastery, Zhu Gang donated the funds for this reconstruction, but after his death the monastery declined. This stele was erected by the abbot Zhiguo in 1466 to commemorate

Figure 5.11 Duofu Monastery, general view, Taiyuan, Shanxi province. Photograph: Weidner.



another restoration; the reverse side of the stele lists names of the artisans involved, including nine painters. Two inscriptions pertaining to this work are found in the Precious Hall of the Great Hero (Daxiong baodian), the first main hall, where the murals stretch over the east, west, and north walls. One, written in ink on the underside of a ridge purlin, dates the restoration to 1456. The second, added when the walls were painted, corresponds to 1458.[72]

Like the Chongshan Monastery album, the Duofu Monastery murals present the life of Shakyamuni in eighty-four episodes, and for the most part the sequences match. Differences are found, however, in the compositions, figure drawing, and narrative techniques. In the murals, the figures are crisply delineated in a Southern Song manner in vogue among Ming professional painters and at the court. Individual figures are convincingly placed in space, animated, and related to other figures in a lively fashion through posture and gesture. The settings are equally well defined, with architecture, clouds, trees, and other landscape elements used to divide episodes within the continuous space. The landscape mixes naturalism and decoration, with many elements—trees and rocks—rendered largely in ink. The Chongshan Monastery pictures, though skillfully done, suffer by comparison. They are often rather wooden and flat, lacking the animation and drama of the murals. The landscape settings rely heavily on patterns and color and are more decorative than naturalistic. On the whole the album leaves look like a rote performance, which indeed they must have been given the ostensible circumstances of their production. We might surmise that the lost Chongshan Monastery murals bore a greater resemblance to the wall paintings surviving at the Duofu Monastery.

The life of Shakyamuni is also illustrated in Ming murals at Qutan Monastery, in Ledu county near Xining, Qinghai province. Although within the borders of Shaanxi province during the Ming, this was (and remains) a politically sensitive border area in the Tibetan cultural sphere, and for this reason the monastery received substantial support from the Ming court. Prior to the Ming, the site apparently consisted of a single Buddha hall.[73] In the early Ming, the abbot, Sanluo (or Sanla), reportedly submitted to the authority of the Chinese court, offered horses in tribute (horses from this region being highly prized by the court), and requested in return imperial protection for the monastery and an imperial tablet. The emperor agreed, presented a tablet reading "Qutan si," giving the monastery its name, and ordered Sanluo's nephews to become his spiritual heirs. The Qutan Monastery Hall, the first of the three major halls on the axis of the final monastery plan (fig. 5.12, no. 4), was built in the Hongwu period. The Xining Prefectural Buddhist Registry was also set up at that time, with Sanluo in charge.[74]

Steles and tablets of the Yongle, Hongxi (1425), and Xuande (1426–1435) periods document continued imperial involvement with Qutan Monastery. A Yongle imperial edict stele dated 1408, inscribed in Chinese and Tibetan, recounts Ming Taizu's patronage of the monastery and places all of the monastery's holdings—buildings, agricultural fields, pasture land, gardens, and animals—under imperial protection, enjoining officials, soldiers, and all people to believe in the religion and treat the monks and monastery property with respect. A second Yongle stele, dated 1418, records the emperor's donation of a golden Buddha image (images?). A huge imperial stele of the Hongxi period traces Ming imperial involvement with Buddhism, noting the esteem of the religion by both Zhu Yuanzhang and Zhu Di and their promulgation of Buddhist doctrines. This stele is matched by one of the Xuande era, dated 1427, which states that the emperor, following the precedents set by his ancestors Zhu Yuanzhang and Zhu Di, built the Longguo Hall, the rear hall of the monastery. On the altar

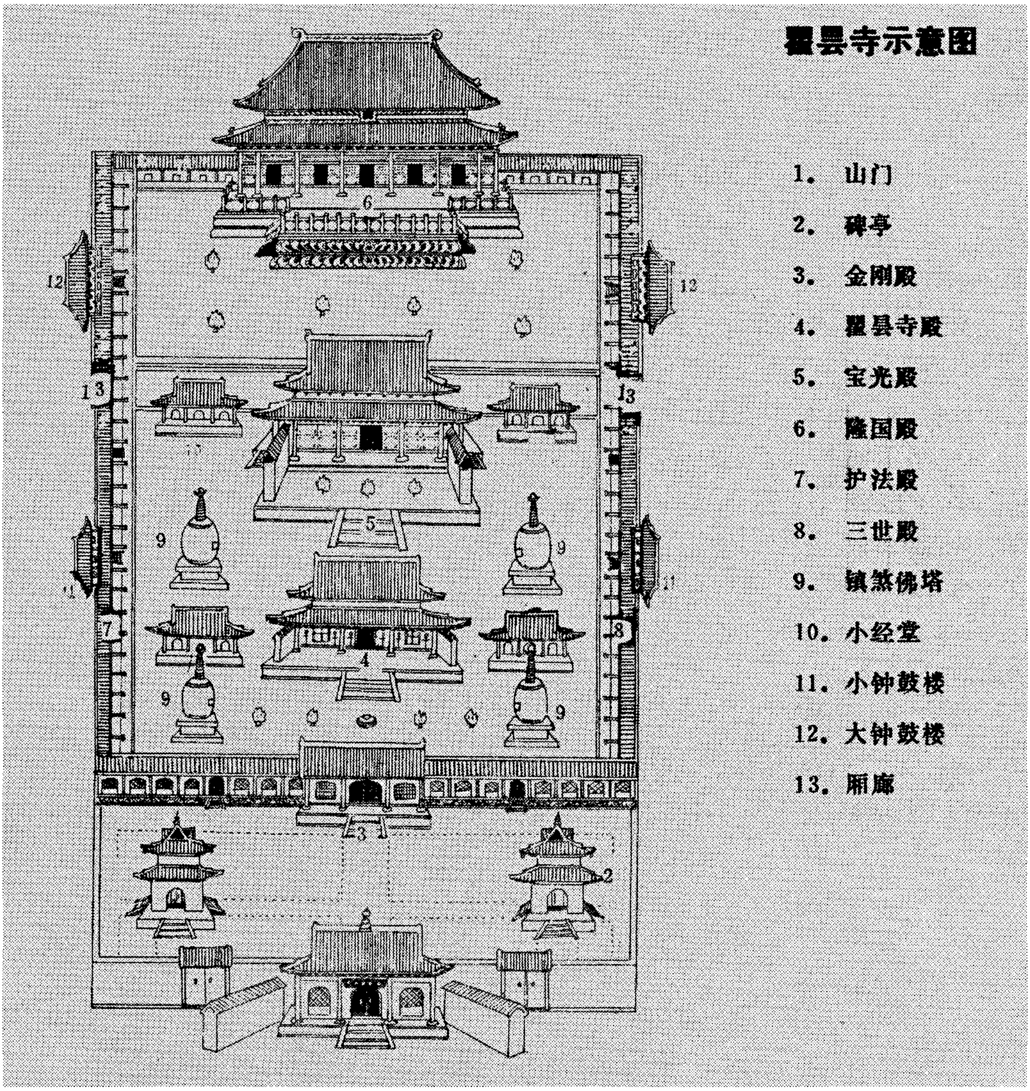


Figure 5.12 Plan of Qutan Monastery, Ledu, Qinghai province. Key: 4. Qutan Monastery Hall; 5. Baoguang Hall; 6. Longguo Hall. Ming dynasty. After *Qutan si (Qu Tan Lamasery)* (Xining: Qinghai renmin chubanshe, 1986), 3.

inside this hall is a wooden tablet wishing the emperor long life. The inscription on the back reads, "Erected by the eunuch officials of the Directorate of Imperial Accoutrements Meng Ji, Shang Yi, Chen Heng, and Yuan Qi in the ninth day of the second month of the second year of the Xuande period (1427) of the Great Ming."[75] The eunuch Shang Yi, it might be recalled, is also named as in charge of the production in the inscriptions on the *shuilu* ritual paintings dated 1454, discussed above.

Qutan Monastery is another Chinese palace–style complex and has even been nicknamed the Little Palace (Xiao gugong). Its architecture has been compared to Ming architecture in the capital, and there is a local saying: If you visit Qutan Monastery, you will not wish to go to Beijing again.[76] Court taste carries through the murals in the gallery that frames the



Figure 5.13 *Episode from the Life of Shakyamuni: Nine Dragons Bathing the Baby Buddha*. Mural, corridor of Qutan Monastery, Ledu, Qinghai province. Ming dynasty, early 15th c. From *Zhongguo bihua quanji, Zangchuan siyuan bihua* (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe, 1989), 115.

courtyards, connecting to either side of Longguo Hall at the rear of the compound. It is thought that the gallery was built in the same year as the hall, 1427. Dating the murals themselves, however, is more problematic since the techniques and styles suggest that they were done at two different times. Those thought to be earlier, such as the depiction of the nine dragons bathing the baby Buddha (fig. 5.13), are characterized by relatively simple compositions and now muted colors. Each segment is titled and accompanied by a poem with seven-character lines.[77] Stylistically they rely on Song-derived traditions popular at the Ming court. The episode of the Buddha's bath, for instance, is solidly in the lineage of works such as the Song album leaf *Palace Ladies Bathing Children* traditionally assigned to the tenth-century master Zhou Wenju.[78] Thus, their far western location notwithstanding, these murals look steadfastly to the east, to the Chinese heartland. These murals have been likened to contemporary wall paintings in Shanxi, with explanations for this likeness including the use of *fenben* (draft sketch) and the presence of artists from central China in this far western region.[79] Whatever the specifics of transmission, the murals at Qutan Monastery, like those at Duofu Monastery in Taiyuan, illustrate the spread of court taste and pictorial traditions through Buddhist channels far beyond the cosmopolitan centers of the Ming. They represent the high level of pictorial art and sophistication of the aesthetic culture that Buddhist monasteries made available to the general public, even in the most remote locales.

Conclusion

Refining the aesthetic sensibilities of the provinces was obviously not the point of architectural and artistic displays such as those at the Chongshan, Duofu, and Qutan monasteries. As suggested at the beginning of this essay, both church and state had long benefited from the casting of Buddhist art and architecture in Chinese imperial modes. Buddha was visually naturalized as a Chinese prince, while his church served the courts of China in myriad ways, from facili-

tating exchange with other Buddhist countries to filling the Chinese landscape with constant visual reminders of the splendor of Chinese imperial authority. That this symbiotic relationship between church and state contributed to the creation of opulent and sophisticated aesthetic environments in parts of the country not usually associated with such things in the Ming was a fortunate by-product. Equally fortunate for the history of art were the intersections between Buddhism, the Ming court, and diverse segments of the population, including women, ethnic minorities, and eunuchs. Recognition of these dynamics affords an exhilarating expansion of the geographic and cultural horizons imposed by traditional, literati-centered accounts of Ming art.

Notes

Research for this chapter was supported by an Art History Travel Fund grant from the Kress Foundation Department of Art History at the University of Kansas and by the University of Kansas General Research Fund.

1. There is now a substantial literature on the revival of Buddhism in the late Ming, including Hsü Sung-peng, *A Buddhist Leader in Ming China: The Life and Thought of Han-shan Te-ching* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Press, 1979), and Chün-fang Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981). A notable recent entry is Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993). Interestingly, while documenting the extensive interaction between local gentry and Buddhist institutions in the late Ming, Brook embraces the old formulation of Chinese Buddhist history as put forth by Kenneth Ch'en, according to which post-Tang Buddhism is evaluated by Tang-dynasty standards. Following Ch'en, Brook observes that institutional Buddhism fell into "stagnation and decline" in the Song dynasty (960–1279) and never recovered, a monastic career came to be regarded as a "second-class undertaking," and, given the demise of Buddhism in India, the Chinese clergy were forced to draw on dwindling indigenous spiritual sources. Most relevant to the argument advanced in the present essay, however, are Brook's observations about the relationship between the court and the monasteries. Here too, contrasting the situation in the Ming with that in the Tang and earlier times, Brook plays down court support of the monasteries in the Ming on the grounds that "Ming Buddhism was not woven into the net of secular power." He argues that "neither the court nor the national elite acted as a consistent support for monasteries," allowing only that "emperors, eunuchs, and high officials might lavish gifts on a few nationally prominent monasteries." Without taking exception to his view that such monasteries could not "automatically claim the attention of those at the highest stratum or power" or that prominent officials patronized monasteries "as individuals or as members of their local gentry rather than by virtue of their authority at court," one might argue that Brook has underestimated both the extent and the political motives of patronage by members of the imperial family and the court. They may not have offered "consistent" support or support comparable to that of the Tang rulers, but they made significant contributions to more than just "a few nationally prominent monasteries." See Brook, 29–31.
2. Zhu Houcong (r. 1522–1566), for instance, was a devoted Daoist and actively suppressed Buddhism, destroying relics and melting down Buddhist images. See L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography 1368–1644* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 321 (hereafter, *DMB*).
3. The first Ming emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang, took strong measures to control the temples and clergy, including the consolidation of monasteries and the establishment of a system of provincial, district, and county monks' registries at major monasteries. On the "amalgamation and regularization" and other impositions on monasteries in Fujian province in the Ming, see T'ien Ju-k'ang, "The Decadence of Buddhist Temples in Fu-chien in Late Ming and Early Ch'ing," in *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries,* ed. E. B. Vermeer (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990).

4. See Patricia Berger, "Preserving the Nation: The Political Uses of Tantric Art in China," in *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850–1850,* ed. Marsha Weidner (Lawrence, Kan.: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas; Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), 89–123.
5. *DMB,* 298, 303, 856–859. About the involvement of Ming court women, particularly Empress Dowager Li, with the Baoming Temple in the Western Hills outside Beijing, see Thomas Shiyu Li and Susan Naquin, "The Baoming Temple: Religion and the Throne in Ming and Qing China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 48.1 (June 1988): 131–188.
6. The Buddhist monk Zushan (fl. 1360–1373), for instance, was appointed by Zhu Yuanzhang in 1371 to lead a special mission to Japan. Hok-lam Chan has observed, "[Zushan's] appointment followed the arrival (September, 1371) of the first Japanese embassy, headed by the monk Sorai. . . . The decision to entrust [Zushan] with such an important mission was probably because the emperor, having discerned the priestly character of the Japanese embassy, thought his Buddhist servants might play a useful role in fostering Chinese-Japanese accord." Seven more monks accompanied the mission, one as deputy envoy, and their departure was marked by a grand Buddhist ceremony at Tianjie Monastery in Nanjing, perhaps "part of the imperial scheme to impress the Japanese envoys" ("Tsu-shan," *DMB* 1314–1315). The importance of monks in exchanges with Tibet is exemplified by the 1378 mission of the monk Congle to the western regions. In Herbert Franke's words, "This is another instance of the first Ming emperor's using Buddhist monks for diplomatic and political purposes" ("Tsung-lo," *DMB,* 1320). The exchange of Buddhist objects between nations, however, was based not only on political considerations but also on the personal beliefs of Ming emperors. In addition to the exchanges of gifts between Tibetan and monks and the Chinese (see Berger, "Preserving the Nation," 108; also, Marsha Weidner, "Buddhist Pictorial Art in the Ming Dynasty: Patronage, Regionalism, and Internationalism," in *Latter Days of the Law,* 53), we can take as examples the demands that the Yongle emperor and his envoy, the senior eunuch Huang Yan, made in Korea for Buddhist images, relics, sutra paper. See "Yi Pang-wŏn," *DMB,* 1596.
7. Timothy Brook has cast his discussion of gentry patronage of Buddhist monasteries in terms of Bourdieu's concept of "symbolic capital," referring to "the accumulation of good repute through investment in expensive local undertakings such as charity and ostentatious display of wealth." He quotes Bourdieu: "The great families never miss a chance to organize exhibitions of symbolic capital." In developing his argument, Brook contrasts symbolic capital with the political capital possessed by the state, arguing that the local gentry without state-conferred political power were able to assert themselves in their localities in part through the accumulation of symbolic capital, including that gained through patronage of monasteries. The tensions Brook recognizes between "economic means and political power" and between "state-monopolized political power from above" and "the socioeconomic reality of everyday political life . . . in the locality" illuminate the value and operation of symbolic capital among the local elites and the role this capital played in "the history of the locality asserting itself against the state." While useful in divining the motives of local elites in patronizing monasteries, Brook's dichotomies are misleading in regard to the court. The court's monopoly on "political power from above" notwithstanding, it maintained and extended its authority through a complex of practices—political, economic, and symbolic—an "economy of practices," to borrow another term from Bourdieu. Though for different reasons, the court, like the local elites, needed to build symbolic capital in the localities, especially in politically fragile border regions. One means of doing this was to support monasteries and temples, even though the monastery, in Brook's words, "sat beyond the framework of institutions of state regarded as necessary for its control." Court patronage of the monasteries, however far-flung and politically charged nationally and internationally, was still designed to influence local audiences. It was for the court no less than for the gentry a useful display of benevolence, a form of noblesse oblige. For the discussion by Brook, see *Praying for Power*, 19–21. On "symbolic capital" and "economy of practices," see Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 171–183.
8. On imperial cities and palaces as symbolic replicas of the "underlying geometry of the universe," see Edward H. Schafer, *Ancient China* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1967), 101–110.
9. Ibid., 107.
10. Exceptions are *Art in China* by Craig Clunas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), which will no doubt become a "standard account," and the exhibition catalogue *Latter Days of the Law,* cited above (n. 4).
11. On court-sponsored publishing of scriptures during the Yongle period, see Zhou Shaoliang, "Ming

Yongle nian jian nefu kanben fojiao jingji" (Buddhist sutras published by the palace in the Yongle period of the Ming dynasty), *Wenwu*, no. 4 (1985): 39–41.

12. On the gifts given to visiting Tibetan clerics, see Weidner, "Buddhist Pictorial Art in the Ming Dynasty," 53; Berger, "Preserving the Nation," 107–110, 271–273; Wen Zhu, "Xizang difang Mingfeng bawang de youguan wenwu" (Cultural relics connected with the Ming-appointed eight kings of Tibet), *Wenwu*, no. 9 (1985): 89–90; Heather Stoddard Karmay, *Early Sino-Tibetan Art* (Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips, 1975), 80–82, 98.
13. On the visit of Dezhin Shegpa to the Yongle court and his relationship with the emperor, see *DMB*, 481–483; H. E. Richardson, "The Karma-pa Sect, A Historical Note," parts 1 and 2, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1958, 147–149, and 1959, 1–8; Elliot Sperling, "Early Ming Policy toward Tibet: An Examination of the Proposition that the Early Ming Emperors Adopted a 'Divide and Rule' Policy Toward Tibet," Ph.D. diss., Indiana University (1983), 74–135; Sperling, "The 5th Karma-pa and Some Aspects of the Relationship between Tibet and the Early Ming," in *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*, ed. Michael Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi (Warminster, England: Aris and Philips, 1979).
14. One version is reproduced in Pratapaditya Pal, *Tibetan Painting* (Basel: Ravi Kumar/Sotheby Publications, 1984), pl. 92. For a discussion of the origin and attribution of this work, see Berger's essay in this volume, n. 14.
15. *DMB*, 482; Richardson, part 1, 148; part 2, 1–8; also, Berger's essay in this volume.
16. To the numerous precedents cited by Berger, such as the well-known painting of auspicious cranes over the palace of Song Huizong, can be added the recorded depiction of *Auspicious Grain* by the Yuan master Zhao Mengfu and the anonymous painting of the same subject in the collection of the National Palace Museum. See *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei*, ed. Wen C. Fong and James C. Y. Watt (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Taipei: National Palace Museum; and New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996), 271–272.
17. Monk Zhencheng, comp., *Qingliang shan zhi* (Topographical history of Mount Qingliang) (1596); reprint: *Zhongguo ming sheng congshu* edition (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1989), 129–130. This event is also recorded in the provincial gazetteer, *Shanxi tong zhi*, Luo Shilin, comp., ch. 168, 7b. Here, however, the book is called the *Foming qu jing* (Scripture of songs of Buddha's name), and the year of compilation is given to be 1410. I thank my students Chiu Lili and Wang Hui for their assistance with the translation of this passage.
18. See *Possessing the Past*, 332–333.
19. See Weidner, "Buddhist Pictorial Art in the Ming Dynasty," 52–54.
20. Mu Yiqin, ed., *Mingdai yuanti zhepai shiliao* (Historical materials pertaining to court-style and Zhe school painting in the Ming dynasty) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1985), 10–11; Yu Jianhua, ed., *Zhongguo meishujia renming cidian* (Dictionary of Chinese artists) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1981), 1356. The latter is the source of the statement that Jiang painted actual events for presentation to a foreign country; the origin of this statement has yet to be traced.
21. Two paintings of Buddhist subjects attributed to Jiang Zicheng are published, one in Fei Fanjiu, *Lichao minghua Guanyin baoxiang* (Famous paintings of Guanyin of successive dynasties) (Shanghai: Jingyan she, 1940), 1:19; the other in *Kokka*, no. 27. Their current whereabouts are unknown. The anonymous Daoist painting attributed to Jiang is published in Kojiro Tomita and Hsien-chi Tseng, eds., *Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Portfolio of Chinese Paintings,* vol. 2: *Yüan to Ch'ing Periods* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1961), pl. 94.
22. Zhu Mouyin, *Huashi huiyao* (Ming), 4; cited in Mu Yiqin, *Mingdai yuanti zhepai shiliao,* 11.
23. Wang Shizhen, *Chibei outan* (1691), 14; cited in Mu Yiqin, *Mingdai yuanti zhepai shiliao,* 122. Zhou Shachen, *Beijing Old and New: A Historical Guide to Places of Interest* (Beijing: New World Press, 1984), 287–289.
24. Richard Barnhart, "The Return of the Academy," in *Possessing the Past,* 345–346.
25. Reproduced in Liao Ping, ed., *The Yongle Palace Murals* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1985), 96–97.
26. About Ming Taizu's "syncretic view" of the so-called Three Teachings—Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism—see *The Cambridge History of China,* vol. 7: *The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644,* ed. Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pt. 1, 147.
27. Barnhart, "The Return of the Academy," 346.

28. For a color reproduction see Jay A. Levenson, ed., *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1991), cat. no. 287.
29. Brook, *Praying for Power,* 279–280.
30. The seated image of Guan Yu in this hall has been dated to the early Qing. See Li Xiangde, ed., *Shuanglin si* (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1989), 2, 25.
31. Remarks by Richard Barnhart, panel discussant, with reference to the paper presented by Hsingyuan Tsao, "Worshipping Guan Yu as a Way of Establishing Legitimacy," at the annual meeting of the College Art Association, February 1992. For a portrait of the Yongle emperor, see *Possessing the Past,* 329. Song-dynasty cases of conflation of imperial portraiture and portrayals of heroic figures are discussed by Hui-shu Lee, "Art and Imperial Images at the Late Southern Sung Court," in *Arts of the Sung and Yuan*, ed. Maxwell K. Hearn and Judith G. Smith (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), 249–250, 258.
32. Li Song, "Beijing Fahai si," *Xiandai foxue* 4 (1963): 41; Jin Weinuo, "Preface," in Yang Yin and Qian Hong, eds., *Fahai si bihua* (Beijing: China Travel and Tourism Press, 1993), 2–5, 94–95; Jin Weinuo and Luo Shiping, *Zhongguo zongjiao meishu shi* (China's religious fine arts history) (Nanchang: Jiangxi meishu chubanshe, 1995), 236–238.
33. For full views of the rear wall, see Yang Yin and Qian Hong, eds., *Fahai si bihua*, pls. 53, 54.
34. The links between the garden imagery in these murals, paradisiacal gardens, and imperial gardens were explored by Elizabeth Kindall in "Landscape Murals at the Fahai Monastery: The Imperial Garden as Paradise," a paper for the Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs, October 1996.
35. *Latter Days of the Law,* cat. nos. 25–30; Caroline Gyss-Vermande, "Démons et marveilles: vision de la nature dans une peinture liturgique du XVe siècle," *Arts Asiatiques* 43 (1988): 106–122; Wai-kam Ho, Sherman E. Lee, Laurence Sickman, and Marc F. Wilson, *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting: The Collections of the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, and The Cleveland Museum of Art* (Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1980), 153, no. 131.
36. For more on eunuch patronage, see Weidner, "Buddhist Pictorial Art in the Ming Dynasty," 55–57. At the tomb of the Ming eunuch Tianyi in the western suburbs of Beijing, a recently opened exhibition hall presents (as of fall 1999) photographs and information on a number of eunuch-sponsored temples.
37. On the continued involvement of eunuchs with Buddhist temples later in Ming, see Li and Naquin, "The Baoming Temple," 138–143.
38. *Latter Days of the Law,* 280–282.
39. Shanxi Provincial Museum, comp., *Baoning si Ming dai shuilu hua* (Ming-dynasty water-land ritual paintings from the Baoning monastery) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1988); *Pilu si bihua* (Wall paintings of the Pilu monastery) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei meishu chubanshe, 1984).
40. The term "nine lotuses" (*jiulian*) refers to the paradise of Amitabha, with its nine grades of rebirth. There may be a link between this Pure Land image of Guanyin, with Amitabha in his crown, and the "Nine-Lotus Bodhisattva" with which Empress Dowager Li strongly identified. As recounted by Li and Naquin, this bodhisattva appeared to Empress Li in a dream and gave her a text; the empress dowager subsequently dedicated a hall to the Nine-Lotus Bodhisattva at Cishou Monastery, west of Beijing, and came to be identified as an incarnation of this deity. The same authors suggest that the empress dowager might have been stimulated to dream of this bodhisattva by her association with the nun Guiyuan of Baoming Temple. Guiyuan was regarded as an incarnation of Guanyin, to whom one of the main halls of the temple was dedicated. See Li and Naquin, "The Baoming Temple," 144, 156, 160–162.
41. *Latter Days of the Law*, fig. 12. The stele is today at Fayuan Monastery in Beijing.
42. Zhencheng, *Qingliang shan zhi*, 35–36; Puay-peng Ho, "Building for Glitter and Eternity: The Works of the Late Ming Master Builder Miaofeng on Wutai Shan," *Orientations* 27.5 (May 1996): 67–73; Wu Yingcai and Guo Juanjie, eds., *Zhongguo de fosi* (China's Buddhist monasteries) (Tianjin: tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1994), 101.
43. Zhencheng, *Qingliang shan zhi*, 82. On Mount Wutai the cleric conducted more rites for the emperor's deceased parents (*DMB*, 482).
44. Sperling, "Early Ming Policy toward Tibet," 152. According to Sperling, "Sometime after [the Yongle emperor] gave him his title [May 11, 1415], Shakya ye-shes visited Wu-t'ai-shan, where he granted audiences to large numbers of people, monks and laymen alike, and gave teachings, initiations, and ordinations to many of them." As Sperling also points out (153–154), Chinese sources give a rather different account

of Shakya Yeshe's visit, making no mention of his filling in for his teacher Tsongkhapa, who declined the Yongle emperor's invitation to court. The *Qingliang shan zhi* (ch. 3, 83) for instance, maintains that the cleric went to the mountain out of reverence for Manjushri, who is believed to dwell there, and settled at Xiantong Monastery in 1414. When the emperor learned of this, he dispatched the eunuch Hou Xian to summon him to court. Hou Xian was actually sent to Tibet and Nepal bearing an invitation for Tsongkhapa (Sperling, 147).

45. Ho, "Building for Glitter and Eternity," 67–73; *DMB*, 462–466.
46. Ho, "Building for Glitter and Eternity," 67; *DMB*, 462–465; Kefu and Qianqing, *Shuangta youlan zhi* (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1990), 103–104. Else Glahn, in *DMB*, identifies the empress as the instigator of the project on Mount Luya, but the authors of *Shuangta youlan zhi* state that Fudeng asked the empress dowager for help with the project.
47. Ho, "Building for Glitter and Eternity," 67–69; Kefu and Qianqing, *Shuangta youlan zhi,* 104; *DMB*, 464–465. According to Ho (68), the funds for the bronze hall initially came from common donors, but when word of the project reached Empress Dowager Li, she and the emperor sent funds for rebuilding the whole monastery.
48. These structures are discussed in detail by Ho, "Building for Glitter and Eternity," 68–73. While the bronze hall and statue of Guanyin at Mount Baohua have been lost, the flanking brick halls remain; see J. Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries: Their Plan and Its Function as a Setting for Buddhist Monastic Life* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1937), 254–260.
49. Kefu and Qianqing, *Shuangta youlan zhi*, 104.
50. As a youth, he met the prince at Wangu Monastery, where the prince lived. Fudeng later went back and rebuilt and enlarged the monastery; the remaining structures are all his work. *DMB*, 462–463.
51. Kefu and Qianqing, *Shuangta youlan zhi*, 104–105.
52. On the positions and strategic deployment of the Ming princes, see *DMB*, 389–390; Mote and Twitchett, *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 7, pt. 1, 120–121, 138–139, 161–162, 170–178.
53. *DMB*, 1561–1564, 1644.
54. Ibid. He added a colophon to *Mount Taibai* by Wang Meng, a handscroll in the Liaoning Provincial Museum (see *Liaoning sheng bowuguan canghua ji,* 1 [Beijing, 1962], 92–95), and wrote on the same artist's *Bamboo, Rock, and Flowing Stream*, a hanging scroll in the National Palace Museum, Taibei (see *Yuan si dajia* [*The Four Great Masters of the Yuan*] [Taibei: National Palace Museum, 1975], no. 406). About Daoyan as a painter, see Alice R. M. Hyland, "Chinese Paintings in Texas Museum Collections," *Ars Orientalis* 25 (1995): 151–154.
55. Jiang Yihan, "Yuan neifu zhi shuhua shoucang (The Yuan palace collection of painting and calligraphy)," *xia* (pt. 2), *National Palace Museum Quarterly* 14.3 (Spring 1980): 29–31, pl. 9.
56. *DMB*, 390, 356; Mote and Twitchett, *Cambridge History of China,* vol. 7, pt. 1, 120–121, 138, 171; Zhang Tingyu, ed., *Ming shi* (Official history of the Ming dynasty) (reprint, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), ch. 116, 3562.
57. From a tablet dating to the twelfth year of Yongle (1414) cited in Zhang Jizhong and An Ji, eds., *Taiyuan Chongshan si wenwu tulu* (Pictorial record of the cultural relics of Chongshan Monastery in Taiyuan) (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1987), 8.
58. It was so designated in the Hongwu period (1368–1398). *Shanxi tongzhi*, ch. 168, 2a.
59. *Zhongguo de fosi,* 81.
60. For a full account of the halls and plan, see *Taiyuan Chongshan si wenwu tulu*, 15–16; or Zhao Mingzheng, ed., *Taiyuan mingsheng guji jicui; Taiyuan wenshi ziliao* (Collection of places of historic interest and scenic beauty in Taiyuan; historical accounts of past events of Taiyuan) (Taiyuan: Taiyuan shi zhengxie wenshi zhiliao weiyuanhui, 1993), 19:49–50.
61. *Taiyuan Chongshan si wenwu tulu*, 13–14.
62. In 1882, the provincial governor Zhang Zhidong proposed erecting a vast Confucian temple on the ruins of Chongshan Monastery, dividing the old monastery grounds into two sections. *Taiyuan Chongshan si wenwu tulu*, 21.
63. Ibid., 24–25, 33–36.
64. Also part of this aesthetic culture was the monastery's collection of printed and handwritten sutras. Today Chongshan Monastery is one of the country's major repositories of Buddhist scriptures, a portion of which

originally belonged to the monastery. The rest were moved there in recent times. See *Taiyuan Chongshan si wenwu tulu,* 38–44.

65. Both albums are reproduced completely in *Taiyuan Chongshan si wenwu tulu.*
66. *Shanxi tong zhi*, ch. 168, 2b.
67. Reproduced in *Taiyuan Chongshan si wenwu tulu* (plates unpaginated). About Zhu Zhongxuan's succession as prince of Jin, see *Ming shi*, ch. 116, 3564. Zhu Zhongxuan was reportedly a cultivated individual, conversant with things of the past and fond of model calligraphy; see Yu Jianhua, *Zhongguo meishujia renming cidian,* 229. The Shakyamuni album preface is marked with an apparently much worn single seal reading "Jinfu tushu"; it is similar to but not exactly like the two versions of this seal reproduced in *Signatures and Seals on Painting and Calligraphy* 2 (Taibei: National Palace Museum), 2:81. Both albums also have colophons written by a monk from Yunnan; the one following the Sudhana album is dated 1484. The Shakyamuni album has in addition a colophon dated 1612 by another descendant, presumably by the last Ming prince of Jin, Zhu Qiugui.
68. Comparison might be drawn, for instance, with the Yuan-dynasty murals (completed in 1358) depicting the life of Daoist immortal Lu Dongbin in fifty-two episodes on the walls of the Chunyang Hall at the Yongle gong; see Liao Ping, ed., *Yongle Palace Murals,* 67–93.
69. For the murals at Jueyuan Monastery, see Mu Xueyong, comp., *Jiange Jueyuan si Ming dai fozhuan bihua* (Ming-dynasty wall paintings of the life of the Buddha at Jueyuan Monastery in Jiange [county]) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1993). Known to me only through the rather poor reproductions in this book, the Jueyuan Monastery murals have a "folk" character and probably represent a regional tradition. Compared to the Chongshan Monastery albums and the murals at both the Duofu and Qutan monasteries, they are less sophisticated in figure style, landscape rendering, and general treatment of pictorial space.
70. They also might be compared to the early-Ming illustrations of the life of Shakyamuni in thirteen hanging scrolls in a private collection in Japan. Done in rich colors and gold, these paintings display a similarly opulent court style. See Shimbo Tōru and Kaneko Keizō, *Butsuden zu* (Pictures of the life of the Buddha) (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbun sha, 1978), nos. 70–103.
71. *Taiyuan mingsheng guji jicui*, 30.
72. Chai Zejun, *Shanxi siguan bihua* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1997), 103. Another restoration took place in the Wanli period; see *Taiyuan mingsheng guji jicui*, 30–31. Continued involvement of Ming princes with the temple is indicated by references in the *Shanxi tong zhi* (ch. 168, 5b–6a) to poems written by the Prince of Jin Zhu Qiugui (the last Prince of Jin) and the Prince of Jing'an Zhu Xinhuan. Also of some interest in tracing the history of court connections with this temple is the reference in the same gazetteer to Changhai, a monk of the temple, and two other monks, Honglian and Yijin; they were known as the Three Lofty Scholars. In the Yongle period, Changhai was summoned to the capital to take part in the compilation of the Buddhist canon.
73. It was called the Sezhe Sanluo Buddhist Temple. *Qinghai gudai wenhua* (Ancient civilization of Qinghai) (Xining: Xining renmin chubanshe, 1986), 134.
74. Ibid., 136; Zhao Shengchen, *Qutan si* (Qutan Temple) (Ledu county, Qinghai: Office of Cultural Relics of Qutan Temple, 1985), 6? (unpaginated); *Ming shi*, ch. 330, 8541–8542. According to the *Ming shi*, this monk's disciples competed in establishing monasteries, and each time the emperor bestowed a name and an imperial order of protection. The Qutan Monastery Hall was reportedly remodeled in the eighteenth century; Zhao Shengchen, *Qutan si,* 6? (unpaginated).
75. *Qinghai gudai wenhua*, 136–140. I am grateful to Chiu Lili for her assistance in reading these stele inscriptions.
76. *Zhongguo de fosi*, 407.
77. Zhang Shengchen, *Qutan si,* 18? (unpaginated).
78. Reproduced in Thomas Lawton, *Freer Gallery of Art Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition II: Chinese Figure Painting* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1973), 204.
79. Jin and Luo, *Zhongguo zongjiao meishu shi*, 219–220. Another factor may have been the immigration of Nanjing residents to Qinghai in the Ming period. According to Cong Zhiyuan of William Patterson University, the Ming-dynasty move of people from Nanjing to Qinghai is recorded in Nanjing gazetteers and family histories (*jiapu*).

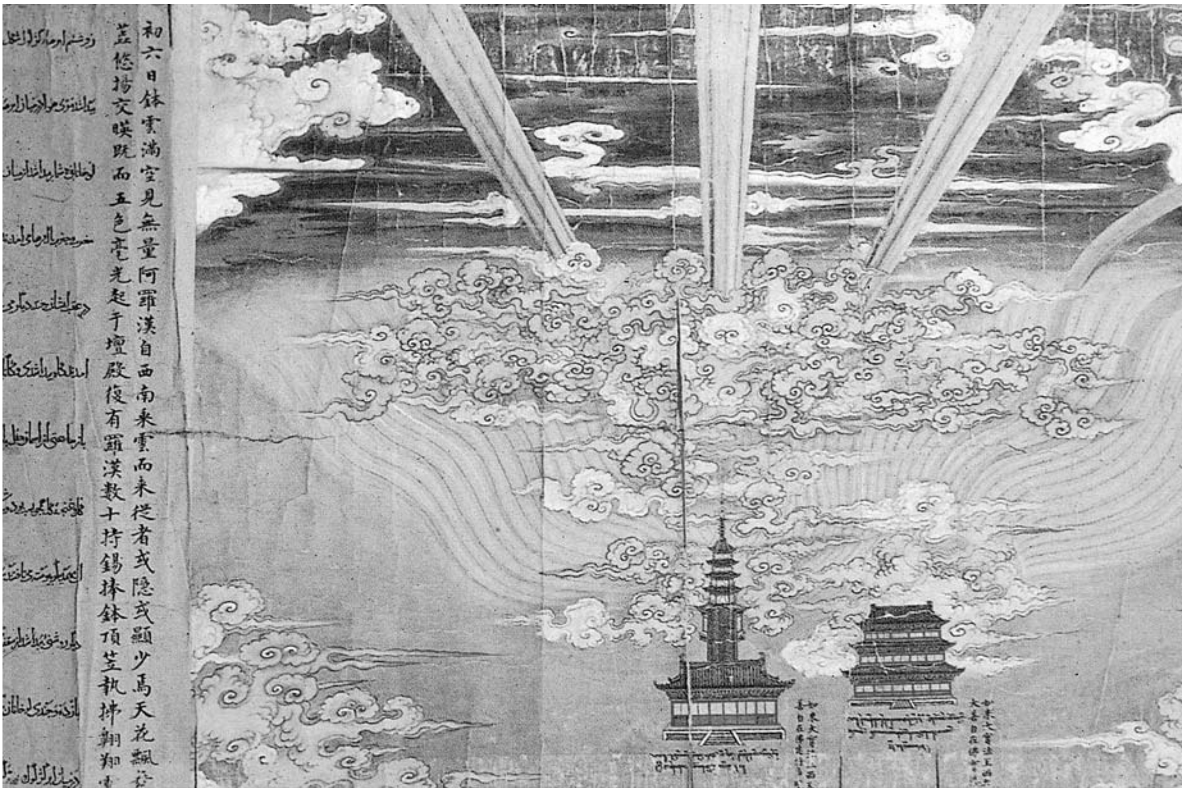
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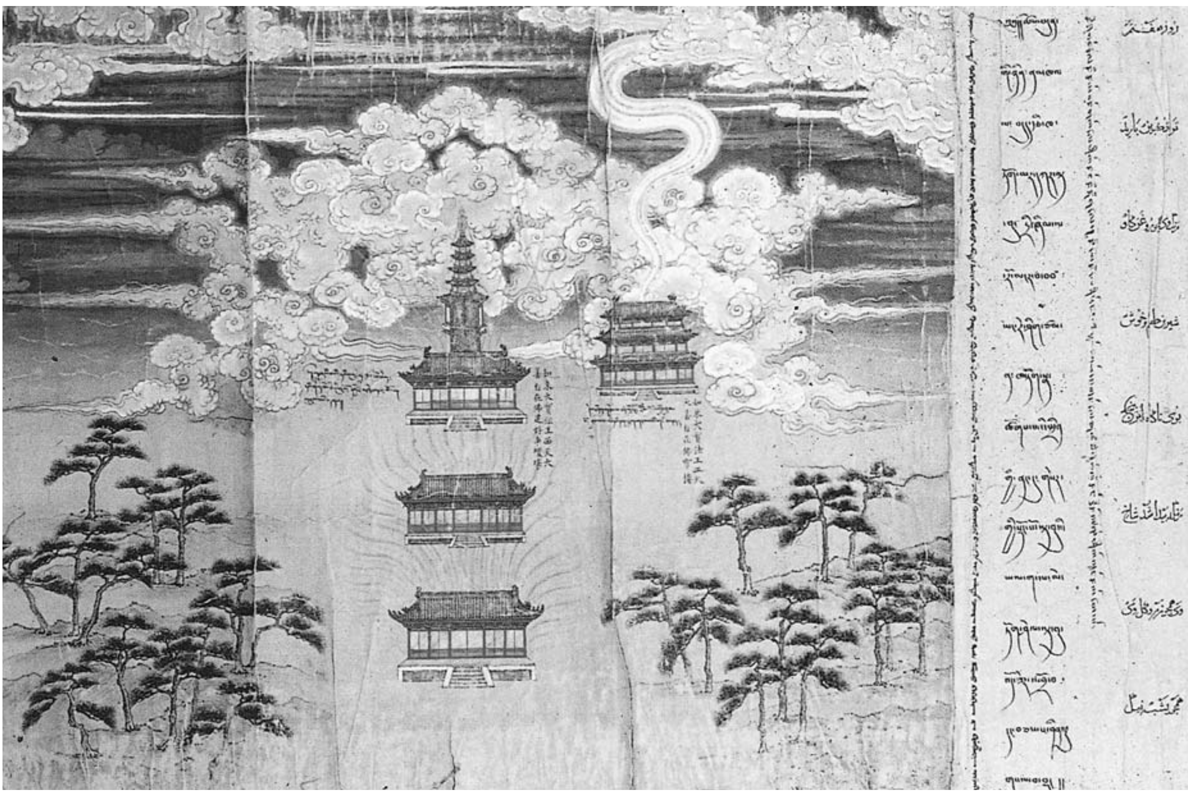
Miracles in Nanjing: An Imperial Record of the Fifth Karmapa's Visit to the Chinese Capital

Patricia Berger

IN 1949 Hugh Richardson, then a member of the Indian legation in Tibet, traveled west from Lhasa to the seat of the incarnate Black-Hat (Zva-nag) Karmapas, Tsurphu Monastery. While there he was shown a fifty-meter-long silk handscroll that recorded the events surrounding the visit of the Fifth Karmapa (1384–1415) to the court of the Ming Yongle emperor, Zhu Di, in 1407.[1] The Karmapa had been invited to Nanjing to perform a mass of universal salvation *(pudu dazhai)* at Linggu Monastery in honor of the Yongle emperor's late father, the Hongwu emperor, and his late, putative mother, the Empress Ma. Over the course of his two-month stay in Nanjing and even after his departure for Mount Wutai, where the Karmapa traveled to perform other rites, the skies were filled with miraculous visions—rays of light, rains of flowers, congregations of lohans, bodhisattvas, rainbows, cranes, and other auspicious signs—which seemed to emanate from the Linggu Monastery pagoda, from the monastic hall where the Karmapa rested, from the burial mound of the imperial couple, and from the imperial palace. All of these signs were recorded by the Yongle emperor's court painters in the forty-nine separate scenes of the Tsurphu handscroll and described in multilingual inscriptions, written in Chinese, Arabic, Uighur, Tibetan, and Mongolian (figs. 6.1–6.4).[2] Richardson began to photograph the inscriptions, but his camera failed before he finished. The Sixteenth Karmapa (1923–1990), who still presided over Tsurphu Monastery at the time of Richardson's visit, provided him with transcriptions of the Tibetan texts, which Richardson translated and published a decade later without illustrations.

Tibet came under Chinese control in 1959, just as Richardson was publishing his translation of the inscriptions, and shortly afterward the new Tibetan Autonomous Region's Committee for the Management of Cultural Objects transferred the handscroll from Tsurphu, where it had been kept since the early fifteenth century, to the Norbulingkha in Lhasa. Twenty-five years more passed, during which Tsurphu Monastery fell victim to the Cultural Revolution. Finally, in 1985, a single section of the Karmapa's scroll appeared in the archaeological journal *Wenwu*.[3] In 1992, it was sent to Beijing for an exhibition of Sino-Tibetan art at the Palace Museum, and eight of its forty-nine scenes, illustrating some of the events from the first eighteen days of the Karmapa's stay in China, were published in color.[4] Luo Wenhua of the Palace Museum, Beijing, who had a chance to work on the scroll during its exhibition


初六日鉢雲滿空見無量阿羅漢自西南乘雲而來從者或隱或顯少焉天花飄
蕊悠揚交暎既而五色毫光起于壇殿後有羅漢數十持錫捧鉢頂笠執拂翱翔



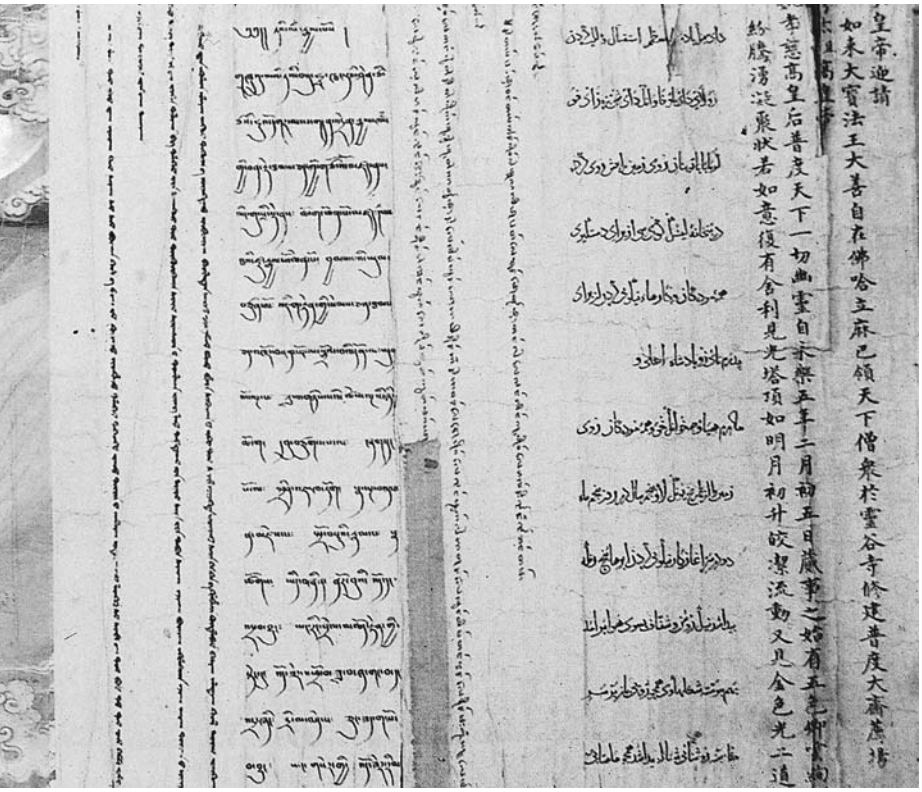


Figure 6.1 Artist unknown, *Miracles of the Mass of Universal Salvation Conducted by the Fifth Karmapa for the Yongle Emperor,* section: the fifth day of the second month of the fifth year of Yongle (1407). Ming dynasty. Handscroll, ink and colors on silk, 4,968 x 66 cm. Formerly in Tsurphu Monastery, Tibet (now in the collection of Norbulingkha Palace, Lhasa). From *Xizang wenwu jingcui* (Beijing: Forbidden City Publishing House, 1992), pl. 26.

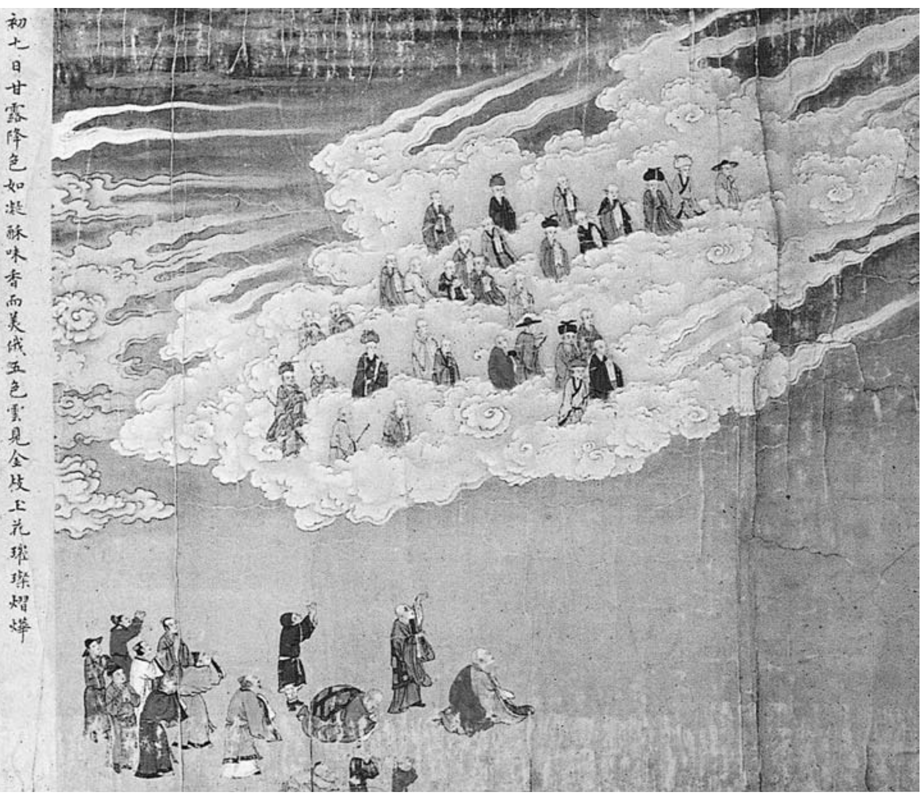


Figure 6.2 *Miracles of the Mass of Universal Salvation*—the sixth day (page right) and seventh day (page left).



Figure 6.3 *Miracles of the Mass of Universal Salvation*—the fourteenth day.

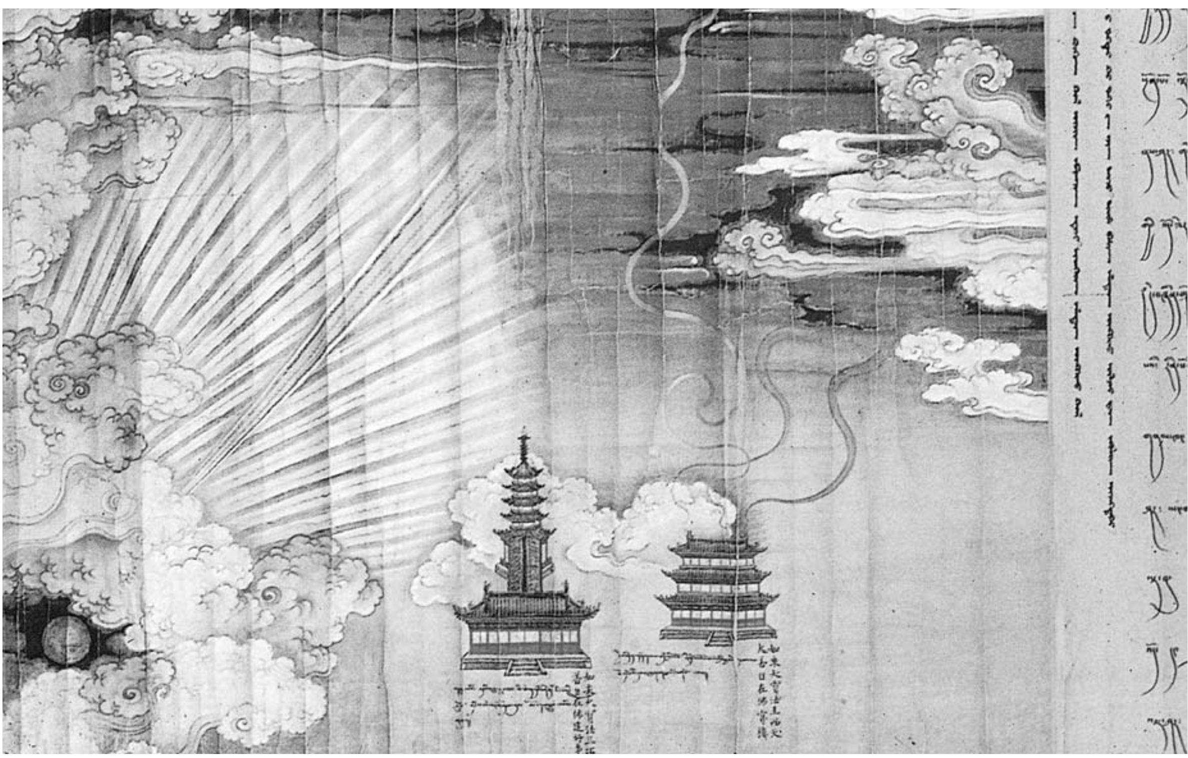


Figure 6.4 *Miracles of the Mass of Universal Salvation*—the eighteenth day.

there, published all of the main inscriptions in Chinese and Tibetan in early 1995.[5] He also traced its history, from its first mention in the Qing-dynasty *Huzang tongzhi* to its transfer to the Norbulingkha.

The sight of the Karmapa's scroll comes as a revelation to students of early-Ming court painting, but the event that generated it—the Fifth Karmapa's performance of the mass of universal salvation for the deceased Hongwu emperor and his consort Empress Ma—is a well-documented part of the Yongle emperor's attempt to revive the relationship between China and Tibet created during the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1280–1368) and to establish firmly his own legitimacy.[6] The Fifth Karmapa, named Dezhin Shegpa or Helima (Halima), was born in Yunnan province in 1384 and was soon discovered to be the reincarnated head of the Black-Hat Karmapas.[7] The Ming Yongle emperor's invitation to him, issued when the Karmapa was only twenty-three years old, was but one of many at least partially pious attempts to bring Tibetan clerics to the Ming court, where they were rewarded with sumptuous presents and given impressive titles.[8] The emperor's overall patronage of Buddhism in all its forms was extremely generous,[9] but his invitations to Tibetan monks, in particular, seem to have been multifunctional and often pointedly pragmatic. Of all of the Tibetan lamas who visited Nanjing at the Yongle emperor's invitation, only three received the exalted title Dharma King (Fawang), and each of these, including the Fifth Karmapa, was given specific ritual responsibilities to perform. Five other important clerics who came received the simpler title *wang* (king); they probably had missions that were commercial or political, bringing horses as "tribute" for the emperor or negotiating the placement of relay stations for the Ming in Tibet.[10]

One famous rejection came from Tsongkhapa (1357–1419), founder of a new, reformed order, the Gelugpa. The modern Tibetan historian Shakabpa, writing from a Gelugpa viewpoint, emphasizes Tsongkhapa's refusal of the imperial invitation and suggests that the Yongle emperor heaped honors on, among others, Fifth Karmapa Helima, who was given the lofty title Rulai dabao fawang xitian dashan zizai fo (Tathagata, Great and Precious Dharma King, Great Goodness of the Western Heaven, Self-Abiding Buddha), because "no ruling lama of any standing would accept [his] invitation."[11] However, to the Yongle emperor, Helima's importance transcended his person; he was an incarnation in the same lineage as Karma Pakshi (1206–1283), the Second Karmapa, who had missioned at the courts of the Mongol rulers Möngke Khan and Khubilai Khan. Monks of the Kagyu order were among the first Tibetan Buddhists to proselytize the Mongols, and of these monks, the Karmapas, Tibet's oldest incarnate lineage, maintained close relations with the Mongol court throughout the Yuan dynasty.

If the Yongle emperor's strategy was often motivated by the resolution of political tensions through commercial opportunity, in arranging the Fifth Karmapa's visit he had a very different agenda: spiritual verification of his very muddy claims to the throne he had usurped in 1401 from his nephew, the ill-fated Zhu Yunwen. According to rumor, and possibly a fact, Zhu Di, who became the Yongle emperor, was born not to the Empress Ma, but to one of the Hongwu emperor's concubines, a woman of Korean or Mongol origin. An even more scandalous version of the story made him the son of the last Mongol emperor, born after his pregnant consort had been snatched from the burning ruins of the Yuan capital and taken into the Hongwu emperor's harem, where, after an improbable eleven-month pregnancy, she managed to pass off her baby as the Ming founder's natural son.[12] With stories like these being whispered about him, Zhu Di began the creative rewriting of his past soon after the civil war

that ended with his conquest of Nanjing, during which Zhu Yunwen and his empress were presumed to have perished. His position was further complicated by the fact that, according to the *Ancestral Admonitions (Zuxun),* he could not inherit the imperial throne as the son of a concubine, Mongol or otherwise. What better way to publicize his new, enhanced persona than to stage, in honor of his late father and putative mother, Empress Ma, an extravagantly public mass of universal salvation performed by one of Tibet's leading prelates? One result of the ceremonies in Nanjing and the radiant miracles that surrounded them was the sanctification of the Ming founding couple as Buddhist saints, a process that added glory to their successor's own hagiography and great weight to his claims to legitimacy. The symbolic, artful refinement of what happened during the Fifth Karmapa's visit seems to have gone on long after his departure from Nanjing, however, for it must be far from coincidental that the visions recorded in the Tsurphu handscroll had historical precedents in the omens of ancient China. Perhaps even more significantly, they also recall the miraculous emanations of one of China's most sacred Buddhist places, Mount Wutai, the Five Terrace Mountains, in northern Shanxi province, where the bodhisattva of wisdom, Manjushri, was believed to dwell.[13]



Figure 6.5 Artist unknown, *Portrait of the Fifth Karmapa, Dezhin Shegpa (Helima).* Hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk; dimensions unknown. Formerly Tambaran Gallery, New York City; current collection unknown.

A Portrait of the Fifth Karmapa

A second painting, a portrait of the Karmapa (fig. 6.5) that also records Helima's visit to Nanjing, offers an instructive comparison to the Tsurphu scroll. It was once part of a set of similarly composed portraits of the Black-Hat Karmapas, which continues to be reproduced and expanded, based on original eighteenth-century compositions designed by Kagyu-affiliated artists of the Karsöpa (Kar-shod-pa) school of Khams, in Eastern Tibet.[14]

The portrait of Helima depicts him as a large figure enthroned in a grove before what can only be Linggu Monastery, where the temple buildings and pagoda emit rays of multicolored light, and a pair of cranes dances in the sky.[15] A much smaller Yongle emperor, wear-

ing his golden-yellow dragon robes and encircled by an aureole, sits at the right. The imperial face and figure are so similar in detail to an official court portrait of the emperor produced in multiple versions for distribution among his allies that the author of the one must have been familiar with an example of the other.[16] But in the Helima portrait, the scale relationship of the Karmapa and the emperor—an unprecedented and reversed relationship from a Chinese point of view—reflects the attitude of the Karmapa's Tibetan biographers, who report that the Yongle emperor gave his guru a higher throne than his own, saying, "In former times an emperor was more powerful than his *guru,* but you, my *guru,* are more powerful than I am."[17] (This symbolic reversal recalls Phagspa Lama's insistence that he be given precedence over Khubilai Khan, although Khubilai's aim, at least for political purposes, was to have them more equitably seated side by side, as "sun and moon," in an embodiment of the dual principle of secular and spiritual rule.)

The Linggu miracles appear in the Fifth Karmapa's portrait as a secondary event, a backdrop to its central theme, the enthroned Karmapa and the Yongle emperor, and, in its record of these events, part political and part spiritual, it presents a far different image of the relationship between the two than the Tsurphu handscroll does, one that benefited the Karmapas more than the posthumous reputation of the Ming ruler. The Yongle emperor, who, according to later Tibetan and Mongolian histories, was one of the Fifth Karmapa's major disciples, is depicted as an initiate seated before his guru.[18] The Karmapa holds the *vajra* and bell, symbols of the Adi-Buddha Vajrasattva and of the union of wisdom, the female principle embodied in the bell, and skillful means, in the male *vajra.* As the Karmapa's insight and spiritual power manifest themselves in the radiant, miraculous displays over Linggu Monastery, his acolyte offers a jar consecration to the emperor, pouring pure water imbued with essences of medicines, grains, and gems over an image reflected in a mirror of the emperor's head.[19] At the same time, a golden, six-armed Guhyasamaja-Manjuvajra appears together with his female consort, or *shakti,* in the sky above the emperor; the two emanate from multicolored rays of light arising behind Linggu Monastery.[20] This tantric conflation of Guhyasamaja, a deity whose tantra is one of the main inspirations of the Karmapas, and Manjushri, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, incarnate in the Mongol emperor Khubilai Khan, and, in the minds of later Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhists, in the Ming Hongwu emperor as well, illustrates in Tibetan terms the spiritual union of the Karmapa and his patron, the Hongwu emperor's son.[21]

Signs of Heaven's Favor

The Tsurphu handscroll is, superficially at least, much less explicit about the nature of the relationship between the Fifth Karmapa and the Yongle emperor, neither of whom appears in the sections published or exhibited to date. Both its architectural imagery and its lengthy, multilingual inscriptions (according to Karmapa histories, drafted by the Yongle emperor himself), which detail each of the miraculous visions marking the Karmapa's itinerary with a bureaucratic ardor, are designed to serve masked, imperial ends, even though they also accommodate a purely spiritual, Buddhist interpretation. In a symbolic sense, the Tsurphu handscroll discreetly twines two strands into a single, universalist cord. The first, dominant strand glorifies the *vajra* energy of the Fifth Karmapa and his imperial disciple in purely Tibetan terms; the second derives from the very ancient Chinese belief that the virtue of the ruler is

made manifest through heavenly signs and portents.[22] This second strand seems designed to repeat specific Chinese historical precedents and, in quoting them, to validate the Ming dynasty as a whole, but particularly the Yongle emperor's own questionable reign and his policy toward Tibet. Nor does such a careful, historically correct approach violate the tenets of Tibetan Buddhism, a tradition based on the practice of generating inner visions that reproduce the insights of great yogins of the past in minute detail. The legitimation provided by past precedent had an appeal for Chinese and Tibetans alike.

The yellow dragon, the phoenix, and the unicorn, who appear among men to witness the presence of a virtuous ruler; the sighting of comets; the discovery of buried ancient tripods and river charts; the appearance of sweet dew; monstrous births; and a wide array of other extraordinary events have been given portentous meaning in China from ancient times. As Martin Powers has said, "Omens were highly attractive to rulers because they could be used to shape public opinion,"[23] allowing rulers, in their role as civilizers of men, to "change the way people saw and heard things."[24] It was only a short step from this type of benign direction to the use of omens as propaganda. The late–Western Han reformer Wang Mang, for example, distributed leaflets listing the omens that foreshadowed his takeover before he usurped the throne in 9 C.E.,[25] and, centuries later, the Tang empress Wu Zetian manipulated reports on the sighting of cloud-borne immortals before toppling the Tang imperial family and proclaiming herself emperor of China in 690.[26]

Because of their effect on popular thinking, the sighting and reporting of miraculous events rose to new levels of refinement in the Han dynasty, especially after outlying regions realized they could receive benefits from the throne for finding anomalous objects that hinted at the extraordinary nature of the times. Han scholars set a pattern for using omens as a medium of praise and criticism that became a regular part of Confucian political rhetoric because omens could be interpreted to point at Heaven's complicity in or opposition to political decisions taken by the ruling house. Even more significant was their use by Daoist priests, who manipulated the reading of omens to provide legitimacy to shaky dynasties and supernatural support to would-be kings.

Han dynasty art, visual and poetic, is filled with representations and descriptions of auspicious signs.[27] The two Good Omen slabs decorating the ceiling of the offering shrine dedicated in 151 C.E. to the retired Confucian scholar Wu Liang are among the best known surviving examples. They illustrate portents ranging from the appearance of the unicorn, yellow dragon, divine tripod, and glass *bi* disk, to sports of nature—pair of birds sharing a single wing, two fish joined at the eye, the mysterious *mingjia* plant, and the jade horse. These miraculous appearances were reason for considerable imperial pride or dismay, suggesting as they did that the ruler's virtue, or lack of it, had merited Heaven's approbation or condemnation. Their appearance in Wu Liang's shrine can be interpreted as a direct act of criticism; Wu Liang, known as a serious scholar of the River Charts and other apocrypha, was an outspoken, if "retired" critic of Han imperial policies.

The gathering, recording, and interpretation of omens was serious business for China's rulers and their advisers well after the Han, as the annals of dynastic histories witness. At the same time, ominous emanations and auspicious discoveries also played a significant role in Buddhist belief. The *sharira* relics of the Buddha himself and those of saintly believers were seen to glow with miraculous light; monks dreamed of buried images and stupas, only to discover them exactly where they had seen them in their dreams; and holy sites provided radiant

manifestations of supramundane power to those intent enough in their practice to witness them. The blending of Daoist and Buddhist practice, which characterized much of early Buddhism in China, can also be observed in the handling of relics, especially by Empress Wu Zetian. Empress Wu significantly moved omenology into the Buddhist realm when she commanded that the bone relics of Shakyamuni housed at the Famen Monastery be fitted into jade and gilt bronze reliquaries, just as the portentous river charts of earlier Daoists were. The housings of these records were called *xia,* the same term used to describe the jade body suits of elite dead in the Han dynasty.[28] *"Xia,"* translatable as "casket" or "shell," is a term pregnant with meaning, suggesting simultaneously the charismatic, heaven-derived power of Buddhist *sharira* and the reliclike character of the records and charts of Daoism.

Precedents at Mount Wutai and Elsewhere

One of China's holiest Buddhist sites was Mount Wutai, near the border of China and Mongolia. It first emerged in Chinese consciousness as a place frequented by Daoist immortals, but, by the early Tang dynasty, through a creative reading of the Huayan (Flower Ornament) Sutra, it was established as the seat of Manjushri and had begun to take on broader, national significance. At Mount Wutai, the devout could (and still can) see manifestations of the bodhisattva's presence in radiant beams and balls of light, luminous clouds, visions of heavenly lohans and solitary monks, flights of birds, and palatial but ephemeral cloisters and pagodas that seem to hover in the air—much the same sights that appeared at Linggu Monastery during the Fifth Karmapa's visit.[29]

Raoul Birnbaum's study of the visionary eighth-century monk Shenying, who spent years at Mount Wutai, shows that by the Tang dynasty the visions experienced on the mountain's terraces had developed an amazing but predictable repertory.[30] Birnbaum traces the monk's visionary talents to his intense practice of the Lotus Samadhi *(Fahua sanmei),* a lengthy, seven-day meditation specific to Tiantai Buddhism.[31] Shenying saw before him an immense and splendid monastery, a sight that inspired him to raise a million cash to realize his vision in wood and tile. Birnbaum notes that at least four other architectural visions resulted in construction projects at the site, some of them subsidized with imperial funding.

Mount Wutai's position as the home of China's own bodhisattva Manjushri made its support natural, even imperative, for Tang rulers, and later even more so for the Mongols, the early emperors of the Ming, and the Manchu emperors of the Qing, some of whom, posthumously, indirectly, or covertly, claimed a direct link to Manjushri through incarnation.[32] The bodhisattva's many manifestations quickly assumed the same significance at court that anomalous appearances of tripods, charts, cranes, immortals, and dragons had for earlier rulers. And Mount Wutai, far from remaining a marginal place with a charismatic local cult, came to mediate between China and the uncivilized world beyond the Great Wall, its visions part of the extended mythos of a specifically Chinese Buddhism.

One of the richest surviving records of a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai is the diary of Zhang Shangying, a Song scholar-official and Buddhist who traveled there in 1088 and 1090 and witnessed amazing visions, including appearances of the bodhisattva Manjushri himself. Robert Gimello's remarkable reading of the diary shows that Zhang's language was derived from the highly ornamented Huayan Sutra, which Zhang was well aware contained a passage hinting at Manjushri's presence at Mount Wutai. The phrasing in his prayers to Manjushri



Figure 6.6 *Map of Mount Wutai;* midtenth century; rear wall of cave 61, Mogao Grottoes, Dunhuang. From *Chūgoku sekkutsu: Tonko Bakuko kutsu* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1988), vol. 5, pl. 55, 57.

and descriptions of his visions also relies on an influential commentary on the sutra, and particularly its teachings on the Buddha's radiance *(foguang),* written by the Tang-dynasty layman Li Tongxuan.[33] Though Zhang's own practice emphasized Chan meditation, he understood that visionary experience of the most glorious and unearthly sort could offer profound insight, and he railed against the unidimensionality of some of his conservative Confucian contemporaries. However, as Gimello also demonstrates, Zhang's experiences on Mount Wutai served a pointed political purpose, as they allowed him to memorialize the throne and recommend the removal of (meat-eating) military troops from the mountain's slopes.

A unique visual record of the visions seen at Mount Wutai exists in the famous map-mural in Dunhuang Cave 61, dated to the midtenth century,[34] a vista of the site that stretches 15.5 meters across the back wall of the cave and 3.5 meters from plinth to ceiling (fig. 6.6). It is laid out as a convincing landscape with each of its major elements—natural, architectural, and supernatural—detailed and labeled. Many of the celestial events that appear in the Tsurphu handscroll (with some variations) can be seen in cave 61: lohans lowered on a cloud, a herd of descending dragons, a flight of cranes, multicolored clouds, and beams of radiating light. Most of these—radiant light, colored clouds, mysterious lohans—are old, established Buddhist motifs that manifest the numinous presence of bodhisattvas of the tenth rank; others are filtered through the omenology of the Han and pre-Han court. The cranes in cave 61, for example, are black, recalling the ancient and very auspicious two-thousand-year-old, dark-plumed cranes *(xuanhe)* recorded by Sima Qian, twenty-eight of which landed at a palace gate

in reponse to music,[35] as well as another black crane, who flew with egrets, swans, cormorants and storks over Chang'an's Lake Kunming in Ban Gu's *Rhapsody on the Western Capital.*[36] Even the descending lohans in the Mount Wutai mural duplicate the appearances of cloud-borne Daoist immortals as recorded in Tang anecdotes and Song-dynasty paintings and tapestries (see below); the cartouche that accompanies the lohans in cave 61 calls them *xian,* the term used for Daoist immortals. But most specific of all the identifications between the miracles that occurred in 1407 at Linggu Monastery and those of Mount Wutai have to do with the bodhisattva Manjushri himself. The Tsurphu scroll's inscription records that Manjushri, unnamed but mounted on his characteristic blue lion vehicle, appeared in radiant splendor in Nanjing with his fellow bodhisattva, the elephant-borne Samantabhadra (also anonymous), on the eighteenth and last day of the Mass of Universal Salvation. It further reports that the Karmapa, having finished his work in Nanjing, left for his next destination, Mount Wutai, to repeat the ritual a second time, thus tying the fate of the imperial parents buried in Nanjing to the numinous power of the Five-Terrace Mountain.

While the visions at Mount Wutai and Linggu Monastery are often identical, hinting at the manifest presence of advanced bodhisattvas and of Manjushri in particular, the ways they are depicted in the Dunhuang mural and Tsurphu scroll are not. The Dunhuang mural is precise enough to function as a map.[37] The site's main attractions, as Dorothy Wong has shown, are arranged not only to reproduce the pilgrim's actual experience, but also to serve as an ideological representation of Manjushri's *buddhakshetra* (C. *fotu,* Buddha-land) and as a spiritualized narrative backdrop to a large, sculptural representation of Manjushri (now lost). However logically the scene is laid out, other elements suggest a more complex experience of the site. Wong argues that the way each element is labeled, with the genitive marker *zhi* inserted between the place name and nominative (for example, Jian'an *zhi* si, "Jian'an's" or "Establishing Peace's" Monastery, rather than Jian'an si, "Establishing Peace Monastery"), suggests the primacy of the visionary—in this case, a vision that embodies how peace is established—over its material reproduction and memorialization as an architectural structure.[38] While the Dunhuang mural presents a spectacular array of visions as if they take place simultaneously in a radical conflation of historical time, the Tsurphu scroll reveals a series of similar events in an orderly sequence, day by day over a period of eighteen days, each day's events carefully separated spatially (and, in the viewer's perception, temporally) from every other day's. But the Tsurphu scroll also conflates historical time through its appropriation of approved, auspicious precedents, turning the representation of history into a revelation or prophecy of the future. Even more radically, the scroll takes the viewpoint of the observer in a state of samadhi, just as described by the monk Shenying; it dissociates many of the visions from any ground plane (which is often eliminated altogether); arranges and rearranges the buildings of Linggu Monastery from one episode to the next as if they were immaterial, weightless emblems; and focuses attention on the sky, against which the narrative is played out event by event. This radical and blatantly subjective fragmentation and reassembly of space also recalls the unique experience of Zhang Shangying, who on the sixth day of his visit to Mount Wutai wrote, "[Cao Xu] said, 'Last night, I hear, a golden flare appeared to you. I saw it too, later on when I was outside.' [Yu] asked him, 'What you saw, sir, where was it?' [Xu] replied, 'In the sky.' [Yu] kowtowed exclaiming, 'Wondrous, wondrous indeed! When I saw it from above, it seemed to be over the stream. When you saw it from below it seemed to be in the sky.' "[39]

The Tsurphu scroll's solution to the problem of representing the inner experience of altered consciousness is extreme, but not completely original. A singular precedent exists in an imperial record of a remarkable auspicious event, a painting and inscription that describe the appearance of a flock of twenty cranes over the south gate of the Northern Song imperial palace at Kaifeng in 1112 during the first days of the newly proclaimed Zhenghe era (fig. 6.7). Both the painting and inscription are attributed to emperor Huizong himself (r. 1101–1125).[40] As Peter Sturman argues, the cranes did not appear by accident, but in direct response to hearing the new, reformed music Huizong designed for a lavish staging of the Lantern Festival. The emperor, however, was content to have onlookers draw their own conclusions, and he relates the story somewhat disingenuously, saying that during the evening of the fifteenth day of the first month an auspicious cloud appeared, followed by the arrival of a flock of crying cranes, two of which perched on the roof while the others soared and danced above. Everyone, Huizong reports, bowed to the ground and gazed up with reverence, sighing over how extraordinary the sight was. In the second part of his inscription, the emperor compares the cranes to the auspicious "fairy bird" *(xianqiu)* and to the jade *luan* (female phoenix), classic Daoist harbingers of longevity—in this case, presumably the emperor's own. This was not the only flight of cranes to cross Huizong's path. Five years later, in 1117, he attended a sermon at the Daoist Shangqing Temple, when suddenly the scene was happily interrupted by the arrival of more than a thousand cranes. Huizong commemorated this event with a poem, again tying it to the Daoist beliefs he actively promoted at court.

The painting accompanying Huizong's description of the auspicious cranes that visited

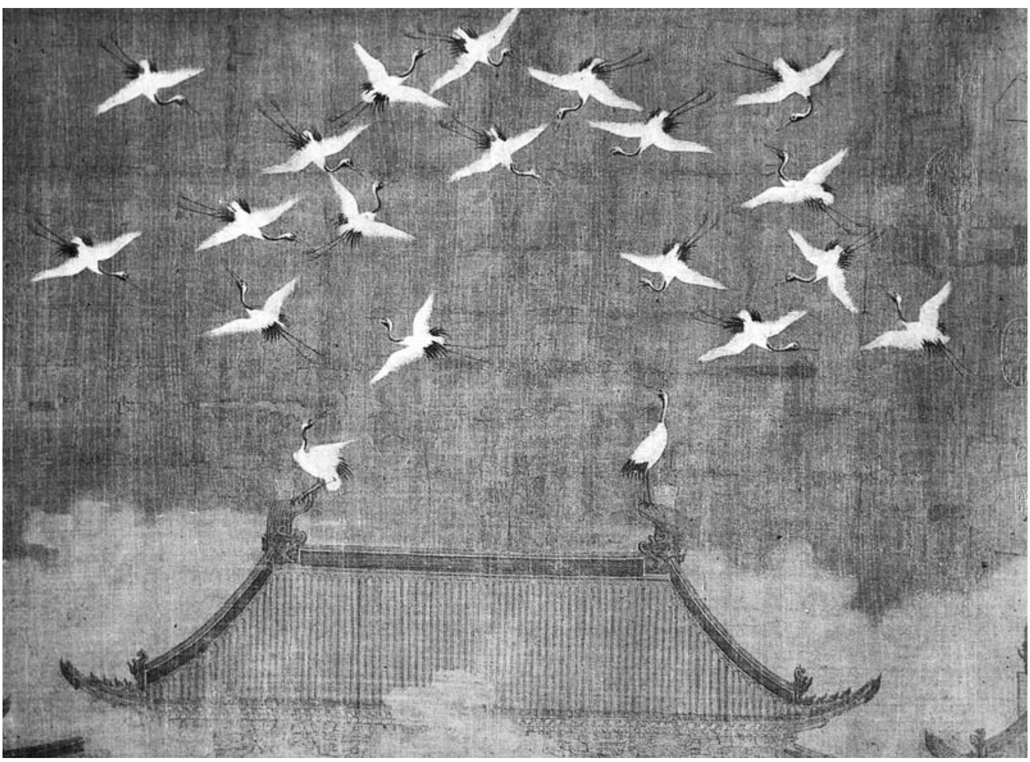


Figure 6.7 Song Emperor Huizong, *Auspicious Cranes.* Handscroll, ink and colors on silk, 51.0 x 138.2 cm. Liaoning Provincial Museum. From *Liaoningsheng Bowuguan* (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1983), pl. 95.



Figure 6.8 *Abode of the Immortals,* Song dynasty. Hanging scroll, *kesi* tapestry, 28.1 x 35.7 cm. Collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.

his palace in 1112 is no less extraordinary than the event itself. Its composition cuts the palace gates off just below the roof, where two cranes have alighted, so the focus is not on the building or the witnesses to the event (who are not seen at all), but on the blue-tinted, cloudy sky, where an airborne wheel of eighteen cranes flies in perfect formation. This compositional ploy is striking and effective because, just as in parts of the Tsurphu scroll, it allows us to see with our own eyes exactly what happened on that day, without the mediation of an awe-struck crowd.

A number of other Song images, all illustrating themes that might be called Daoist, also direct our attention to the sky. Among them is a section of a handscroll attributed to the late-eleventh-century painter Li Gonglin, the *Nine Songs* (once in the Palace Museum, location now unknown), which illustrates symmetrically placed palace buildings set beneath skies filled with elaborate clouds in the shape of a *ruyi* ("as-you-wish" scepter) upon which floats a single descending immortal.[41] Two Song-dynasty, imperially commissioned, *kesi* silk tapestries have a nearly identical theme: a palace under a sky of *ruyi* clouds, augmented by a formally arranged flight of cranes (fig. 6.8).[42] An even earlier precedent for Huizong's unusual composition is a mural of three truncated palace rooftops and *ruyi* clouds that decorates a tomb built for Empress Yongxi, wife of Song Taizong (r. 976–997) in Gongxian, Henan.[43] This painting, like the *Auspicious Cranes* attributed to Huizong, can ultimately be traced to any number of famous precedents, including the visions of immortals seen by the Daoist Tang emperor Xuanzong (r. 711–756) and the much earlier stone engravings of the Eastern Han. The latter first attracted serious scholarly interest in the century before Huizong's reign, coincidentally around the time of Empress Yongxi's death, and often included images of clouds and auspicious birds perched on the *que* (gate towers) that marked elite Han burials.[44]

Reading the Visions

How then should we interpret the mixture of signs, some Buddhist, some not necessarily so, in the Tsurphu handscroll, where, in one section, a congregation of lohans descends from the sky on a cloud (see fig. 6.2, right); in another, rays of light emanate from Linggu Monastery as "sweet dew" gathers on the ground (see fig. 6.2, left); and in yet another, a flock of cranes plays in rainbow-colored rays of light (see fig. 6.3)? The places from which these visions seem to arise are as varied as the visions themselves. The majority come from the Karmapa's dwelling at Linggu Monastery or from the hall where he created a mandala for the mass; others came from the monastery's pagoda, a few from the emperor's own apartments, and two from the tomb of his father and reputed mother. Nonetheless, the inscriptions on the scroll suggest that, in an absolute sense, the Karmapa's activities were the true source of all these wonders, which began only with his performance of the Mass of Universal Salvation for the emperor's deceased parents and ended a month and a half later, when he had already journeyed on to Mount Wutai. That many of the wonders seem tailored to appeal specifically to a Chinese audience can be interpreted as further proof of the Karmapa's brilliant, magical power and skillful means, his answer to the requirement that buddhas and bodhisattvas adjust their appearance and rhetoric in any way necessary to move the unenlightened along the path to liberation.

In the Tibetan view, the Fifth Karmapa was destined to perform this task. He was the fifth exponent of a lineage of lamas especially noted for their ecstatic visions and magical powers, traditions that harked back to the Indian Vajrayana *mahasiddhas* and were continued in Tibet by the white-robed saint Milarepa (1040–1123). In turn, Milarepa's meditations and magical practices were passed on to the Karmapas by Gampopa (1079–1153), the founder of the Dakpo Kagyu tradition. As noted above, the Karmapas are a subgroup of this larger order. They quickly attained significant power, in part because of their extensive missionary work among the Mongols, but more certainly because of their brilliant assertion that their lineage was incarnate, that each Karmapa was literally a rebirth of his predecessors, occupying one of a series of specially selected, but disposable *nirmanakaya* (Tib. *tulku*) or magical transformation bodies.[45] They are tenth-stage bodhisattvas, or even buddhas, able to shift form and take on guises appropriate to the moment. The Second Karmapa, Karma Pakshi, who fell in and out of favor with Khubilai Khan, was Tibet's first recognized *tulku,* the first Buddhist teacher explicitly to declare his earthly form a magical transformation body used for a lifetime to expedite the teaching of Dharma, then vacated at death and left as a sacred husk. In fact, the Tsurphu handscroll inscription accepts outright the actual buddhahood of the Karmapa, referring to him consistently as Rulai ("So-Come"; S. Tathagatha). Similarly, the title granted him by the Yongle emperor pays homage to his advanced spiritual evolution, calling him Rulai, Zizai (Self-Abiding), and even Fo (Buddha).

The Karmapas' supernatural powers, the Karma Kagyu believe, arise from their *vajra* energy, which manifests itself because they are free of ego. Their perfect sanity allows them to operate in realms the unenlightened do not even sense and to alter the everyday perceived environment by their openness and receptivity. One of the most often reported manifestations of the Karmapas' enlightenment is their ability to induce rains of flowers and nectar, as well as atmospheric displays of light and color, the *tianhua* (heavenly flowers) and *wuse haoguang* (multicolored rays of light), with their component colors (gold, white, red, blue), all described

in the Tsurphu handscroll inscriptions.[46] Such displays were reported elsewhere in conjunction with Yongle's other acts of piety. In one incident, a relic glowing like a pearl and multicolored rays of light appeared over the porcelain pagoda of the Great Bao'en Monastery (built to honor the Yongle emperor's deceased wife, Empress Xu) after an imperially sanctioned reading of the sutras took place there.

The soteriology and the aesthetics of Vajrayana Buddhism are saturated with metaphors and images of flowers and light. The enlightened mind opens like a lotus to reveal the glowing jewel within, and perfect emptiness, perceived only when the mind is fully free, is revealed as pure light. Thus the *sambhoghakaya* (bodies of communal enjoyment) of both buddhas and bodhisattvas sit amid showers of blossoms and radiant light, a reflection of their egolessness, inner clarity, and direct experience of emptiness. In the Tsurphu handscroll, this flower-filled, sweet radiance defines and illuminates the Karmapa's path; radiance marks the buildings where he rested, meditated, and performed large sections of the mass of universal salvation. But beams of light also appear repeatedly in a number of other places during his sojourn, both inside and outside Linggu Monastery, and these betray the nuanced hand of the Yongle emperor himself.

On the tenth day of the month, for example, the inscription tells us that as rays of light bounced from one end of the sky to another, "three relics were seen at the top of the pagoda; they looked like the moon-inhaling pearl of the late empress, or the sun washed by ocean waves," and again, on the twelfth and eighteenth days, single relics shining like the sun rose above the pagoda. On the night of the thirteenth day, recalling the visions granted to Shenying at Mount Wutai, a globe of light holding an image of a small pagoda floated above the main pagoda, a vision repeated on the sixteenth day of the third month, when three phantom pagodas, two large, one small, appeared above the Western Chapel. Even more auspiciously, at least from the imperial perspective, on the thirteenth day, the radiance of wisdom *(huiguang)* rested over the tomb of the Hongwu emperor and Empress Ma and over the emperor's apartments, while on the sixteenth day, a shower of blossoms fell on the imperial tomb.

Thus the Linggu Monastery miracles were distributed in an orchestrated crescendo to honor the Karmapa and his ritual actions, the sacredness of the monastery itself embodied in the relics in its pagoda, the imperial ancestors whose remains were entombed nearby, and, last but not least, the Yongle emperor, the Karmapa's patron and disciple. The purpose of the miracles was twofold: to establish the primacy of the Karmapa and proclaim simultaneously that the emperor and his parents were doubly legitimate as virtuous monarchs recognized by a Confucian Heaven and *chakravartin* rulers whose rule foretold a new Buddhist epoch.

The repeated apparitions of radiance from the Karmapa's dwelling and from Linggu Monastery's pagoda, the balls of light that resolved into images of pagodas, and the radiance of wisdom that hovered over the imperial tomb and palace also suggest that all of these places were somehow equivalently sacred. In doing so, they point the way to a fuller understanding of the mass of universal salvation held to honor the late emperor and his consort and make their new status known to everyone. If the Hongwu emperor was actually a chakravartin, then he deserved to be honored by a pagoda-reliquary. And since his remains were sacred relics, they could be expected to give off an undeniable Buddha-radiance *(foguang).* In Buddhist belief, he (and his empress) had already entered on the bodhisattva path and completed their lives as world rulers; their next (no doubt, human) births would take them even closer to buddhahood. The aerial displays above the imperial tomb substantiate the belief, promoted

 enthusiastically by the Yongle emperor and the Karmapas and held in Mongol and Tibetan Buddhist circles, that the late emperor and his wife were manifestations of Manjushri (following the example of Khubilai Khan) and Tara (following the early queens of Tibet). The vision of three light-filled pagodas, two of them large (the emperor's and the Karmapa's) and one small (the empress's) that floated above the Western Chapel of Linggu Monastery (the main site of the Karmapa's performance of the mass of universal salvation); the light of wisdom that emanated from their tomb; and the mysterious visit on the same day from the unnamed Manjushri all hint at an exalted Buddhist status for the imperial couple and their son, and now legitimate successor, the Yongle emperor. The appearance of the paired bodhisattvas Manjushri and Samantabhadra in Nanjing urges a utopian, unlocalized interpretation of their roles as denizens of China's great mountains and expands the meaning of Mount Wutai, as well as that of Samantabhadra's equally miraculous Mount Emei in Sichuan, in the repertory of imperial propaganda. No longer confined to their marginalized border homes in the north and the west, the bodhisattvas now appear unbeckoned (and discreetly incognito) in the capital to prop up the Ming heavenly mandate.[47]

The Case of Han Yu and the Buddha's Finger Bone

The irony of all this would not have been lost on the Ming founder, himself a former monk, since even the ability to see such sights, let alone generate them, required a profound faith and advanced discipline. The truth of this had been revealed centuries before in the unhappy case of the Tang-dynasty Confucian minister of state Han Yu (786–824) and his criticism of the display in Chang'an of the Buddha's finger bone from Famen Monastery. As mentioned above, the Buddha's finger bone was kept, like the Daoist chart records of earlier times, in an elaborate set of nesting reliquaries of jeweled gilt and silver and an inner jade casket *(xia)*. This was placed in the monastery's Pagoda of the Body of Truth That Protects the State. Every thirty years, the bone was paraded through the Tang capital at Chang'an, where the people gathered in an atmosphere of delirium to venerate it.[48] Emperor Xianzong ordered its public display on February 9, 819, moving Han Yu, then one of his most trusted advisers, to submit a critical memorial to the throne.[49] Han Yu claimed he was motivated by concern for public safety because of the excesses of devotion undertaken by Buddhist devotees, who burned their hair, scorched their arms, and bankrupted themselves making huge donations to monasteries in honor of the finger bone. But his memorial, written in a moment of Confucian zeal, also implied that the emperor was the servant of a barbarian (i.e. the Buddha), a situation Han Yu said would probably shorten the emperor's life.

Xianzong found Han Yu's criticism intolerable and his comments about his impending death treasonous, so demanded his minister's immediate execution. Only the intervention of Han Yu's friends persuaded the emperor to exile him to the south instead. Charles Hartman, in a superb study of Han Yu, discusses another aspect of his reaction to the finger bone, one that deeply troubled him and led him, after he had arrived in Chaozhou, to consult the Chan monk Dadian Baotong (732–824).[50] A detailed account of his dialogue with this influential monk, recorded in *Zutang ji* (composed in Quanzhou in 952), says that as the emperor welcomed the entry of the precious relic into Chang'an through Anyuan Gate, a multicolored Buddha-radiance shone from it, which all those present but Han Yu acknowledged and attributed to the emperor's "sagacious influence." Han Yu's inability to see it, or his refusal to

accept it, was tantamount to ignoring a unicorn in the imperial garden, for it underlined his blindness to the emperor's enlightened virtue, to his status as a chakravartin, and to the salubrious influence of the Buddha's body, which was venerated precisely because it protected the nation.

Han Yu's fault was his inflexibility, his refusal to allow that the emperor's virtue could be celebrated by any phenomenon not validated in pre-Buddhist antiquity. He maintained this purist, Confucian view in the face of a society that was drenched in Buddhism, where Buddhist miracles were seen, reported, and recorded with vivid enthusiasm,[51] and where a gilded, bejeweled Buddhist aesthetic prevailed, especially at court. Even so, not all believers perceived the same things. In the eleventh century, the one-time skeptic Zhang Shangying reported that even his own doubts about the veracity of his visions were resolved by seeing "the sort of garnet sphere the giant basilisk holds in its maw" hovering over Mount Wutai on a July day in 1088; others in his party saw what looked like "a golden body rising from a crouch" or "a person sitting in the lotus position with hair done up in a swirl, clad in a purple robe with white collar, brandishing a sword and bearing a horn upon its head."[52]

Conclusion

No such lack of unanimity could be attributed to the Yongle emperor's courtiers, even if they were critical of the emperor's love of Tibetan clerics.[53] The heavenly portents that accompanied the Fifth Karmapa's visit to Nanjing were harmoniously and diplomatically observed by all, in an extended moment of "consensual hallucination,"[54] to include the blinding light of *vajra* energy emanating from the vicinity of the Karmapa, the emperor, and his parents' relics; visits from supernatural Buddhist sages, ecumenically minded, gilt Daoist immortals, and the bodhisattva Manjushri himself; and sweet dew, unseasonable snow, and dancing phoenixes and cranes, which even the most orthodox Confucians could accept as signs of imperial virtue and Heaven's favor.

The emperor's court painters admirably met the challenge of depicting all these wonders. Their solution to the problem was as radical as Huizong's depiction of the auspicious cranes that visited his palace gate in 1112. Like Huizong, Yongle's artists eliminated all distractions, including the protagonists, the Karmapa, and the emperor (the imperial parents already safely out of sight), to focus on the miraculous events at hand, presenting them in an act of imperial grace from the perspective of a visionary observer. The buildings of Linggu Monastery, painted in a delicate *jiehua* (ruled line) style, are flattened, glyphic representations with little setting but the sky, rare clumps of trees, and an unarticulated, ambiguous ground; in some scenes temples hang suspended, as they did in Shenying and Zhang Shangying's visions at Mount Wutai. They switch positions, undermining any sense of their permanence and emphasizing their phenomenal character, and are surrounded by five-colored clouds, rays and funnels of light, dancing cranes, and a red sun that rests at the horizon. The effect is elegant and delicate, but also surreal and disorienting, suggesting that these phenomena are beyond ordinary experience, magically and universally revealed through the beneficial influence of the Karmapa and emperor, and translated into the language of everyday perception and discourse.

The multilingual text that accompanies the paintings is also disconcerting, wavering between a delight in sensual detail typical of Buddhist sutras and their opulent description and a bureaucratic urge to catalogue and enumerate each phenomenon accurately. The result

 is a text that is naive and wondrous, but also numbingly repetitive. It ends anticlimactically and without particular fanfare with the sighting of yet another "cloud of golden light," resonating with the Karmapa's presence days after his departure for holy Mount Wutai. Unlike the multilingual texts on the Yuan-dynasty Juyong Gate, north of Beijing, or the multilingual court records of the Qing Manchu emperors, which vary in content and slant depending on the targeted audience, the Tsurphu inscriptions (at least the Chinese and Tibetan ones) appear to be consistent in content. In their credulous listing of the miracles seen at Nanjing's Linggu Monastery, the inscriptions routinize and, from the perspective of court procedure, normalize the charismatic effect of the Karmapa and emperor. While the evidence of their spirituality is taken as a proof of Buddhist faith, the signs have been translated, at least in part, into a non-Buddhist idiom and made to serve an orderly, bureaucratic, and thoroughly Chinese purpose—the sustenance and legitimation of imperial power.

Epilogue: A Translation of the Chinese Inscriptions

The following translation, based on Luo Wenhua's transcription, does not include the smaller inscriptions placed on the painting itself to identify specific buildings.

1. The Emperor of the Great Ming welcomed the Tathagata, the Great and Precious Dharma King, Great Goodness, Self-Abiding Buddha, Helima, inviting him to take command of all the monks in the empire and to proceed to Linggu Monastery to conduct the mass of universal salvation, in honor of the late imperial father, the Emperor Taizu, and the late imperial mother, the Empress Xiaoci, and for the universal salvation of all the spirits of the dead under Heaven. From the fifth day of the second month of the fifth year of Yongle (1407), when preparations began, there were propitious five-colored clouds, which floated up quickly and coalesced to form a wish-granting gem. Then a relic was seen glowing at the top of the pagoda, like a newly risen bright moon or flowing, glistening water. And two golden rays were also seen (see fig. 6.1).
2. On the sixth day, an alms bowl–shaped cloud filled the sky, and countless lohans were seen coming from the southwest riding on a cloud. Their retinue disappeared and reappeared. Briefly, heavenly flowers whirled and danced, scattered afar and mingled with the sunlight. Finally, five-colored rays of light arose from the mandala hall, and once again there were lohans, ten in number, carrying staffs, grasping alms bowls, topped with bamboo hats, and holding fly whisks. They soared and hovered in the farthest clouds (see fig. 6.2).
3. On the seventh day, sweet dew fell, the color of frozen butter. It was fragrant and beautiful. Suddenly a five-colored cloud was seen, and gold boughs with jade flowers that were lustrous, jeweled, sparkling, and blazing (see fig. 6.3).
4. On the eighth day, a light with five-colored rays came from the southwest, stringing itself out to the northeast. Heavenly flowers whirled and danced, sweet dew fluttered down. A light with five-colored rays also arose from the Tathagatha's precious tower; it flashed and rose up into the sky.

5. On the ninth day, again there was a rain of flowers, and sweet dew fell. Precious umbrellas, streamers, and banners were seen, which whirled and scattered into the highest heavens. And again, a light with rays of five colors rose from the Tathagatha's precious tower.

   On the tenth day, sweet dew fell, its aroma pleasant, like sweet cakes. A light with rays of five colors was seen rising straight up into the sky. Three relics were seen at the top of the pagoda; they looked like the moon-inhaling pearl of the late empress, or the sun washed by ocean waves. Up and down they revolved and spun, dazzling and transparent. And countless lohans were seen floating in the sky, approaching. Ten or more monks with bundles on their heads, holding staffs, passed the city, on their way to Linggu Monastery to receive alms. People wondered at their long eyebrows, broad foreheads, and extraordinary, pure vitality, and so they followed them; but when they got to the monastery gate, no one knew what had become of them.
6. On the eleventh day, a five-colored cloud was seen, heavenly flowers spiraled down, and sweet dew fell. A juniper produced golden flowers shaped like lotuses, which came together, then broke apart, natural, yet marvelous. A light with five-colored rays enveloped the mandala hall.
7. On the twelfth day, there were heavenly flowers as large as coins. Filling the empty sky, they flew and danced round and round. In the evening a red light like a rainbow touched the Buddha's *ushnisha,* illuminating it so that it seemed to emit rays. A light with rays of five colors encircled the Tathagatha's mandala hall. A single relic was seen at the top of the pagoda. Like the dawning sun, it rose in the east, circled up and down, illuminating every nearby tree and blade of grass, intensifying their colors, making them splendid. That done, it came back to blaze again.
8. On the thirteenth day, there were two rays of the light of wisdom *(huiguang),* one touching the imperial tumulus, one touching the imperial palace. And a five-colored globe of light encircled the mandala hall and the precious tower where the Tathagatha was staying. After that, heavenly flowers were seen flying near the tent set up for the vegetarian feast. Though the wind and sun were agreeable and pleasant, an auspicious snow fell. Later a precious light rose from the pagoda hall, in the middle of which was a reflection of a pagoda. There was a monk with red feet and a wonderful, ancient face, his body wrapped in one hundred patches. He held his robe in his left hand, his shoes in his right, and he walked as though he were flying. People noticed his unusual appearance, and followed him, staring. When they arrived at the front of the Buddha Hall, they suddenly could not see him. They searched everywhere, but did not find him. A short time later, they saw him in an auspicious cloud.
9. On the fourteenth day, there were blue phoenixes and white cranes everywhere in the sky, circling and dancing. A five-colored auspicious cloud embraced the sun and then dissipated, coiled round above the mandala, and changed as if by magic. And a round light encircled the precious tower where the Tathagatha was staying. A short while later, another single ray of golden

light ascended to the sky, straight up. And there was a lantern of red light that did not fade for a long time. Day became night; there was a ray of light, and in the midst of its five colors a mandala-realm could be seen, and more than ten images of bodhisattvas that moved back and forth from east to west. From the bannered prayer masts there came a golden light everyone could see (see fig. 6.4).

10. On the fifteenth day, a light with rays of five colors was seen at the Tathagatha's mandala hall and at the precious tower where he was staying. Then it froze, coalescing into lotus flowers that clumped together and stayed joined for a long time. Then everywhere could be seen a light with rays of five colors and auspicious clouds, inside which was a single image of a golden immortal. A white crane floated in the air and came flying and dancing around. After a short while, a single ray of white light crossed the precious tower where the Tathagatha was staying and went east. When it was late, everyone saw rays of light at the pagoda hall and the hall of the Heavenly Kings. There were also two globes of light that reflected one another's brilliance.
11. On the sixteenth day, a light with five-colored rays and auspicious clouds were seen at the pagoda hall and at the tower where the Tathagatha was staying. Five-hued heavenly flowers fell everywhere, covering the imperial tumulus and blanketing the palace.
12. On the seventeenth day, countless lights were seen at the precious pagoda; these lights repeatedly enveloped the mandala hall. In the evening two men stood on top of the prayer flag mast; then a cloud came from the southwest, and two monks were seen in an auspicious cloud, bowing with their palms together. Then there was a gap in the clouds, and after a bit one monk, also bowing with his palms together, followed, and all of them headed toward the mandala hall, where they descended and then rose. Suddenly they vanished. Then three five-colored rays of light rose in the southwest, crossed the mandala hall, and spun off to the northeast. A single ray of white light coming from the east rose straight from the precious tower where the Tathagatha was staying. And again a light with five-colored rays was seen.
13. On the eighteenth day, the rites were brought to a close. Flocks of blue phoenixes and white cranes flew, fluttering, first one, then the other whirling and dancing. Heavenly flowers floated in the air; auspicious clouds were in all four quarters; and luxuriant, propitious vapors, dizzying pearls of sweet dew, a swift, nimble wind, and ten thousand spirits gathered together. And there were auspicious clouds like dragons, like wind, lions, elephants, and pagodas. In the night, two lanterns appeared in the sky above the monastery's two prayer flag masts, their flames so unusually red that cinnabar sand could never reproduce even one ten-thousandth of it. Their light colored all four quarters, and, far away in the lamp's reflection, two figures could be seen approaching, mounted on a blue lion and a white elephant; their necklaces and jeweled girdles glowed resplendently. After a short while, a relic was seen at the top of the pagoda. The light from it was splendid and

dazzling, and mingled with the heavenly lamps. Suddenly Sanskrit chanting was heard coming from the east, out of thin air. The blended tones were pure and clear, silk and bamboo working together, metal and stone playing in harmony; echoing, they made the mandala hall vibrate. When people went into the hall to listen, the sound resonated in the air. This went on for a long time, then stopped, but before it had been stilled, everyone saw a golden world (see fig. 6.5).

14. On the third day of the third month, the title Tathagatha, Great and Precious Dharma King, Great Goodness of the Western Heaven, Self-Abiding Buddha was bestowed out of reverence. A vegetarian banquet was held at Linggu Monastery; more than twenty thousand monks attended. A five-colored light of wisdom strung out from west to east; it glowed like a rainbow bridge and reached to the end of the sky. Then an auspicious cloud was seen, a light fluoresced and glistened, transformed itself, and flowed away. Heavenly flowers were seen over and over, and rosy lights repeatedly enveloped the pagoda hall and the Tathagatha's precious tower. At the top of the tower, three rays of five-colored light were seen, then again a single ray of white light and three rays of golden light.
15. On the fourth day, the Tathagatha went to the palace to convey his thanks. On that day, five rays of blue-white light were seen, and again five-colored rays of light repeatedly enveloped the Tathagatha's precious tower. Two rays of white light were seen on top of the tower, and five-colored rays of light repeatedly enveloped the pagoda hall. And again two cranes joined in a dance on top of it.
16. On the fifth day, the emperor visited Linggu Monastery for a vegetarian banquet. That day, a five-colored light appeared, and again an auspicious cloud of five colors and a golden light shone beneath the sun. At the Tathagatha's precious tower, a five-colored light was seen, and besides that, the golden light was seen again. That night once again a red-rayed light rose in the south and illuminated the mandala hall.
17. On the thirteenth day, the Tathagatha traveled to Mount Wutai, where manifestations of the bodhisattva Manjushri appear. Early that day, as he was leaving Linggu Monastery, a light with five-colored rays was seen in the northwest, a ray of red light rose from the Tathagatha's precious tower, a single ray of golden light was seen at the top of the pagoda, and three rays of five-colored light were seen at the mandala hall.
18. On the fifteenth day, the monks were ordered to recite the Tripitaka in honor of the Tathagatha. Five-colored clouds filled the sky and heavenly flowers the city. Two cranes whirled and danced, reflecting a precious light. That night the sky rang with the sounds of Buddhist music, proclaiming a celebration. It lasted a long time, then stopped.
19. Early on the sixteenth day, shadowy images of pagodas, two large, one small, were seen at the Western Chapel. The larger images had five stories; from the pagodas' foundations to their precious tiles, they measured eleven Chinese feet (one *zhang* and one *chi,* or $12\frac{15}{16}$ English feet). The smaller

image also had five stories; it measured more than five Chinese feet (5 7/8 English feet) from foundation to precious tiles. A light shone, its hues variegated and bright, and a golden color flowed. Sweet dew fell from a Shala incense tree, and rays of light were seen everywhere.

20. On the seventeenth day, eight rays of five-colored light were seen, and again single rays of blue, white, and red light arose in the northeast. A yellow ray of light enveloped the pagoda hall, and a light with five-colored rays was seen at the Tathagatha's precious tower.
21. On the eighteenth day, a ray of blue light rose in the southwest, and a ray of golden light rose at the Tathagatha's precious tower. Then a cloud of golden light was seen.

Notes

1. H. E. Richardson, "The Karma-pa Sect. A Historical Note," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (October 1958): 139–164; (April 1959): 1–17.
2. In his history of the Karmapas, Karma Thinley records that the scroll was produced in multiple form, and that only one version was sent to Tsurphu. Karma Thinley, *The History of the Sixteen Karmapas of Tibet* (Boulder, Colo.: Prajna Press, 1980), 74.
3. Wen Zhu, "Xizang difang Ming feng Bawang di youguan wenwu" (Cultural relics in Tibet relating to the Eight Kings entitled by the Ming), *Wenwu* (Cultural relics), no. 9 (1985): 89–90.
4. *Xizang wenwu jingcui* (A selection of Tibetan cultural relics) (Beijing: Forbidden City Publishing House of the Palace Museum, 1992), 52–53, pl. 26.
5. Luo Wenhua, "Ming Dabao Fawang jian Pudu dazhai changjuan" (A long scroll of the Ming Great and Precious Dharma King performing the mass of universal salvation), *Zhongguo Zangxue* (Chinese Tibetan studies) 1 (1995): 89–97.
6. *Mingshi* and *Mingshilu* both contain information about this visit. For full Chinese references, see L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1:481–482. For information from the Tibetan side, see Karma Thinley, *History of the Sixteen Karmapas,* 71–81; Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History* (New Haven, Conn., and London: Yale University Press, 1967), 83–84 (Shakabpa quotes from the Tibetan historian Tsuglag Trengwa); and Nik Douglas and Meryl White, *Karmapa: The Black Hat Lama of Tibet* (London: Luzac, 1976).
7. Feng Hanyong reiterates all the Chinese sources for Helima's early days. See "Cong Chayu yange zai lun Hou Xian yingjie Halima luzhi" (Another discussion of the route Hou Xian took to welcome Helima in light of developments in Chayu [Tib. Zhoyo]), *Zhongguo Zangxue* 1 (1995): 98–103.
8. Heather Karmay, *Early Sino-Tibetan Art* (Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips, 1976).
9. For an overview of Yongle patronage, see Marsha Weidner, "Buddhist Pictorial Art in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644): Patronage, Regionalism and Internationalism," in *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850–1850,* ed. Marsha Weidner (Lawrence, Kan.: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas; Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), 51–87, esp. 51–54.
10. Elliot Sperling, "Ming Ch'eng-tsu and the Monk Officials of Gling-tshang and Gon-gyo," in *Reflections on Tibetan Culture: Essays in Memory of Turrell V. Wylie,* Studies in Asian Thought and Religion, vol. 12, ed. Lawrence Epstein and Richard F. Sherburne (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edward Mellen, 1990), 75–90.
11. Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History,* 83–84.
12. *Dictionary of Ming Biography,* 355–365. See also Henry Serruys, "A Manuscript Version of the Legend of the Mongol Ancestry of the Yung-lo Emperor," *Analecta Mongolica,* Mongolia Society Occasional Papers, no. 8 (Bloomington, Ind.: Mongolia Society, 1972).
13. Zhu Di's remaking of himself into the Yongle emperor was a process reminiscent of that described by Stephen Greenblatt in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of

Chicago Press, 1980). Certain analogies can be drawn: the Yongle reign and the later reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I were both periods of expansive, imperially subsidized exploration, broadened world view, colonial expansion (or at least the hope of it), delight in the exotic, and imaginative use of religious ideology in politics. Lacking in Tudor England was an alternative, alien example of rulership, such as the one the Ming borrowed in part from the Mongol Yuan.

14. One version of the Fifth Karmapas' portrait is reproduced in Pratapaditya Pal, *Tibetan Painting* (Basel, Switzerland: Ravi Kumar/Sotheby Publications, 1984), pl. 92. Pal attributes the painting to an artist named Karsho Gonpo Dorje, whom he claims lived in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (155–156). But according to David Jackson, Gonpo Dorje was an artist of the Karsöpa School of Kham who worked in the early twentieth century. He did indeed at one point produce a set of portraits of the Karmapas; among them the portrait of the Fifth Karmapa is nearly identical to the version discussed here (Jackson feels the original set may date to the late eighteenth century or after, when the Kagyu was flourishing and had direct access to Chinese models). Gonpo Dorje's set is now in Rumtek, Sikkim. This same series of compositions was also redrawn by Christopher Banigan (Namkha Tashi) for Karma Thinley's *History of the Sixteen Karmapas.* See Jackson, *A History of Tibetan Painting* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996), 298–299, nn. 666, 667; and 292, figs. 148–154.
15. Pal gives a different reading of the hovering temple, recounting a passage from the biography of the Fifth Karmapa that says that when Yongle gave his guru silks and robes, "a magical temple seemed to be present in space." Pal, *Tibetan Painting,* 156.
16. See, e.g., *Masterpieces of Chinese Portrait Painting in the National Palace Museum* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1971), pl. 40.
17. Karma Thinley, *History of the Sixteen Karmapas,* 75.
18. The Yongle emperor also made a significant contribution to Karmapa ritual when he had a hat made of black hair that emulated the magical hat that hovered over the Karmapa's head but was visible only to those devoted enough to perceive his deep spirituality. The Fifth Karmapa made this bejeweled and gilt copy the centerpiece of a new ritual, during which he embodied the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. See Karma Thinley, *History of the Sixteen Karmapas,* 75.
19. For a description of the jar consecration from the *Mañjushrimulakalpa Tantra,* see David Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors* (London: Serindia Publications, 1987), 223–235. Snellgrove points out the particular appropriateness of this consecration for members of noble or royal families and its similarity to a consecration to kingship; the tantra itself says that it should be given to those who are "sons of noble families or desirous of great sovereignty" (234). For a list of the specific empowerments the Fifth Karmapa gave to the emperor and his wife, see Karma Thinley, *History of the Sixteen Karmapas,* 72–73.
20. See, for example, the Zhangjia Hutuktu's pantheon, *Zhufo pusa shengxiang zan,* in Walter Eugene Clark, *Two Lamaistic Pantheons,* Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series, no. 30, vols. 3–4 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1937), 4:232; and the Narthang Pantheon, in Lokesh Chandra, *Buddhist Iconography,* compact edition, Satapitaka Series, vol. 342 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1991), 222, no. 562 (no. 959 is a fierce version of this same deity).
21. David M. Farquhar, "Emperor as Bodhisattva in the Governance of the Ch'ing Empire," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 38.1 (June 1978): 15–16.
22. This issue is raised both by Raoul Birnbaum in "The Manifestation of a Monastery: Shen-ying's Experiences on Mount Wu-t'ai in T'ang context," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106.1 (January–March 1986): 119–138; and by Dorothy Wong in "A Reassessment of the *Representation of Mt. Wutai* from Dunhuang Cave 61," *Archives of Asian Art* 46 (1993): 38. However, the literature on omens and portents and their interpretation in ancient China has grown in recent decades. Especially important is Anna Seidel, "Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments: Taoist Roots in the Apocrypha," in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R. A. Stein,* ed. Michel Strickmann, Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques, no. 21 (Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1983), 291–371. See also Wu Hung, "A Sanpan Shan Chariot Ornament and the Xiangrui Design in Western Han Art," *Archives of Asian Art* 37 (1984): 39–59.
23. Martin J. Powers, *Art and Political Expression in Early China* (New Haven, Conn., and London: Yale University Press, 1991), 227.

24. The Sui-dynasty censor, Li E, in his "Letter Requesting the Rectification of Literary Style," quoted in Stephen Owen, *The Poetry of the Early Tang* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), 17.
25. Powers, *Art and Political Expression,* 227.
26. See Antonino Forte, *Political Propaganda and Ideology in China at the End of the Seventh Century* (Rome: Instituto Universitario Orientale, 1976), xxx.
27. This category was so important that Xiao Tong's *Wen xuan* (Selections of refined literature) contained an entire section devoted to notices of auspicious signs *(fuming),* most of them presented as a way of praising the reigns of Han emperors.
28. The *chanwei* (apocryphal) texts of the Han, which survive only in fragments, say that, for example, the River Chart that the mythical ruler Shun received directly from the Yellow River was kept in such a casket: "The chart was in a yellow jade casket *(xia)* comparable to a bookcase *(gui),* three feet long, eight inches wide and one inch thick. On the four sides were key-slots [into which were fitted] panels *(jian)* of white jade [bound] with golden string [held in place by] yellow plaster seals imprinted on both sides with the five character: 'Tally seal of the Yellow Emperor of Heaven' *(tian huangdi fuxi).* These characters were each three inches long and wide, [engraved] four *fen* deep, and [executed] in bird script *(niaowen).* Seidel, "Taoist Sacraments," 316.
29. See, for example, John Blofeld's account of his visit to Mount Wutai in the 1930s:

> There in the great open space beyond the window, apparently not more than one or two hundred yards away, innumerable balls of fire floated majestically past. We could not judge their size, for nobody knew how far away they were, but they appeared like the fluffy woolen balls that babies play with seen close up. They seemed to be moving at the stately pace of a large, well-fed fish aimlessly cleaving its way through the water; but, of course, their actual pace could not be determined without a knowledge of the intervening distance. Where they came from, and where they went after fading from sight in the West, nobody could tell. Fluffy balls or orange-coloured fire—truly a fitting manifestation of divinity! (*The Wheel of Life: The Autobiography of a Western Buddhist* [London: Rider, 1959], 149–150)

30. Birnbaum, "Manifestation of a Monastery."
31. Daniel Stevenson describes this lengthy retreat in "The Four Kinds of Samadhi in Early T'ien-t'ai Buddhism," in *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism,* ed. Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1986), 45–97.
32. Khubilai Khan's incarnate status was not declared until long after his death, in the 1345 inscription on the Juyong Gate north of Beijing. Among Ming emperors, only the Hongwu and Yongle emperors are given this distinction in Mongolian records. And the Manchu emperors of Qing seem to have used language as a screen for selectively broadcasting their role as incarnations of Manjushri to specific, ethnically defined audiences. In multilingual inscriptions of the period, the honorific "Manjughosha-emperor" is conspicuously left out of Chinese versions. See Farquhar, "Emperor as Bodhisattva."
33. Robert Gimello, "Chang Shang-ying on Wu-t'ai Shan," in *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China,* ed. Susan Naquin and Chün-fang Yü (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 89–149, esp. 111 and 115. Zhang's diaries were reprinted many times, in 1101, 1104, 1141, 1396 (most interesting for the purposes of the Tsurphu scroll), 1462, and 1884.
34. See *Chugoku sekkutsu* (Chinese stone caves) (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1988), vol. 5: *Tonko Bakuko kutsu* (Dunhuang Mogao grottoes), pls. 51–64. A new, closer dating between 947 and 957 has been suggested by Ke Shiji and Sun Xiushen, "Gua Sha Caoshi yu Dunhuang Mogaoku" (The Cao family of Gua Sha and the Mogao caves of Dunhuang), in *Dunhuang yanjiu wenji* (Collection of essays on Dunhuang research) (Lanzhou: Gansu People's Press, 1082), 250–252.
35. *Shiji, Yueshu* (Historical records, book of music), quoted in Morohashi, *Dai Kan-Wa Jiten* (Great Chinese dictionary) (Tokyo: Taishūkan shoten, Shōwa 35 [1960]), 7.20814.52.
36. *Xidu fu* (Rhapsody in the western capital), trans. in David R. Knechtges, *Wen xuan, or Selections of Refined Literature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), 1:141, ll. 408–416.
37. Ernesta Marchand, "The Panorama of Wu-t'ai Shan as an Example of Tenth Century Cartography,"

Oriental Art, n.s. 22 (1976): 158–176; and the more recent study by Wong, "Reassessment of the *Representation of Mt. Wutai.*"

38. Wong, "Reassessment of the *Representation of Mt. Wutai,*" 33, 44–46.
39. Gimello, "Chang Shang-ying on Wu-t'ai Shan," 108.
40. *Auspicious Cranes* is in the Liaoning Provincial Museum. See *Liaoningsheng Bowuguan* (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1983), pls. 95–96. For a discussion of the painting and its thematic antecedents, see Betty Tseng Yu-ho Ecke, "Emperor Hui-tsung, the Artist, 1082–1136," Ph.D. diss. (New York: New York University, 1972), 181–182; and Peter Sturman, "Cranes above Kaifeng: The Auspicious Image and the Court of Huizong," *Ars Orientalis* 20 (1990): 33–68.
41. *Li Longmian Jiuge tu renwu ce* (The characters in Li Longmian's picture of the Nine Songs) (N.p.: Wenming shuju, 1940).
42. *Guoli Gugong Bowuyuan: kesi-cixiu* (National Palace Museum: Tapestry and embroidery), vol. 1 (Taiwan: Palace Museum, 1970), pl. 1 *(Abode of the Immortals);* pl. 3 *(Accumulating Counters in an Immortal Abode).*
43. "Henan Gongxian Song ling diaocha" (Investigation of the Song imperial tumuli at Gongxian, Henan), *Kaogu* (Archaeology) 11 (1964): 564–577, pl. 10, fig. 8.
44. Rudolf G. Wagner has said that portentous imperial dreams, such as Xuanzong's, had a very different function than did ominous appearances in affecting the course of politics. Omens, he argues, were a public device brought to the emperor's attention as a form of criticism and as a corrective to inappropriate behavior, while imperial dreams, which represented direct, privileged communication between Heaven and ruler, could be used by the emperor to advance his own wishes. Rudolf G. Wagner, "Imperial Dreams in China," in *Psycho-Sinology: The Universe of Dreams in Chinese Culture,* ed. Carolyn T. Brown (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1988), 11–24, esp. 20–22.
45. See Richardson, "The Karma-pa Sect," 147–149; and Turrel Wylie, "Reincarnation: A Political Innovation in Tibetan Buddhism," *Proceedings of the Csoma de Körös Memorial Symposium, 24–20 September 1976, Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica* 23, ed. Louis Ligeti (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978).
46. See, for example, Karma Thinley, *History of the Sixteen Karmapas,* where the biographies of all sixteen Karmapas contain incidents of magic.
47. On elite Buddhist utopianism versus the heterotopias of popular cults, see Bernard Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 155–174. Faure argues that elite Buddhism downplayed the importance of locale in an effort to create spaces that did not derive their importance from the specifics of place. In this utopian ("no place") view, all Buddhist spaces are equivalent, and local genii, miracles, or visions were thus appropriated by or subsumed in a universal system.
48. *Wenwu,* no. 10 (1988): 1–43; *Wenwu,* no. 8 (1992): 41–54; *Famen si* (Famen Monastery) (Xi'an: Shaanxi China Tourist Press, 1990); *Famen si digong zhenbao* (Treasures from the subterranean chamber of the Famen Monastery) (Xi'an: Shaanxi People's Art Press, 1989).
49. Han Yü's memorial is in *Changli Xiansheng wenji,* ed. Sibu congkan (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1920–1921), 39:2b–4b. Translated in large part in Edwin Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China* (New York: Ronald Press, 1955), 221–224.
50. Charles Hartman, *Han Yü and the T'ang Search for Unity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), 84–99.
51. Tang-dynasty writers recorded Buddhist miracles avidly, inventing a new, novelistic style of storytelling for the purpose. See, for example, Donald E. Gjertson's translation and study of one such collection, *Miraculous Retribution: A Study and Translation of T'ang Lin's Ming-pao chi,* Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series (Berkeley: University of California, Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1989).
52. Gimello, "Chang Shang-ying on Wu-t'ai Shan," 105.
53. No one dared to impugn his legitimacy. For those who had immediately after Yongle's enthronement, the punishment was swift and sure; even family members were slaughtered to the ninth and tenth degree of relationship; *Dictionary of Ming Biography,* 360.
54. I borrow this term from science-fiction writer William Gibson, who famously used it to describe his own brilliant neologism, "cyberspace."

7

Thangkas for the Qianlong Emperor's Seventieth Birthday

Terese Tse Bartholomew

IN CHINA AND ELSEWHERE, royal birthdays were often occasions for great celebrations. This was especially so during the Qing dynasty (1644–1912), when the emperors and empresses reached the advanced age of sixty, seventy, or eighty. The birthday of the Qianlong emperor (r. 1735–1796) occurred on the thirteenth day of the eighth lunar month, and it was customary for him to celebrate it at the Bishu shanzhuang (Mountain manor for escaping the summer heat), his summer resort in Chengde (Jehol) at the edge of the inner Asian steppes. In 1780, the Sixth Panchen Lama of Tibet went to Chengde to celebrate the Qianlong emperor's seventieth birthday. For this momentous occasion, the emperor had a special temple built in the outskirts of the city. This temple replicated Tashilhunpo, the Panchen Lama's abode in Tibet, and was called the Xumifushou, the Chinese equivalent of Tashilhunpo. It was sumptuously decorated with *thangkas,* sculptures, and ritual paraphernalia. This essay discusses the iconography, layers of meaning, and historical significance of *thangkas* that once decorated the Xumifushou Temple of Chengde and establishes this temple as the provenance of three *thangkas* now in the collection of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.[1]

The Qing Court and the Yellow Church of Tibetan Buddhism

During the Qing dynasty, Tibetan Buddhism was the official religion of the Manchu court. As official policy, the government upheld the Yellow Church (Gelug order) to maintain peace among the Mongols, who embraced this system of belief. The Mongols had for centuries been adversaries of the Chinese and had ruled China from 1260 to 1368. When the Manchus rose up against the Chinese Ming dynasty (1368–1644) in the seventeenth century, the Mongols were still a powerful force and constituted a real threat to Manchu ambitions in China. The early-Manchu rulers were astute politicians who, observing the Mongols' reverence for their lamas, realized that winning the high lamas, especially those in the Gelug order, to their side would be useful in managing the Mongols.

The four lama lineages that played a major role during the Qing dynasty were those of the Dalai and Panchen lamas, the two heads of the Yellow Church; the Jebtsundamba Hutuktus of Outer Mongolia (*"hutuktu"* is the Mongolian term for an incarnation); and the

Jangjya Hutuktus (C. Zhangjia hutuketu) of Beijing. In the Qing period, the Jangjya Hutuktu was the highest incarnation of the Gelugpa lamas in Inner Mongolia and China. Among the four lineages, the Jangjya Hutuktus played the most politically important role in China, where they were state preceptors of the Manchu emperors; the third Jangjya Hutuktu, Rolpay Dorje, for instance, was especially important to the Qianlong emperor.[2] At the same time, visits to China by the heads of the two Tibetan lama lineages, the Dalai and Panchen lamas, were great state events.

Historical Background: The Manchus and Tibetan Buddhism

Nurhaci (1559–1626), the Manchu who rose up against the Ming, was a supporter of Tibetan Buddhism. In an edict of 1621, he forbade his soldiers to destroy monasteries, house their horses and cattle in monasteries, or relieve themselves in a monastery complex.[3] His eighth son, Huangtaiji (1592–1643), similarly tried to protect the monasteries during his war with the Chahar of Inner Mongolia, and thus won the Mongolian lamas to his side. They gave him the famous bronze statue of Mahakala cast under the direction of the lama Phagspa (1235–1280) for Khubilai Khan (1215–1294) to ensure his victory over the Chinese Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279).[4] Huangtaiji installed this figure of Mahakala in his capital at Mukden; later his grandson, the Kangxi emperor (r. 1661–1722), moved it to Beijing. Huangtaiji also sent emissaries to the various high lamas of Tibet, inviting them to come to China. He did not live long enough to meet the Fifth Dalai Lama, but his son, the Shunzhi emperor (r. 1643–1661), did in 1652.

The Fifth Dalai Lama's visit was the first important state visit of a Tibetan prelate to the Qing court. The Shunzhi emperor built Xihuang (Western Yellow) Monastery for this lama's stay in Beijing, setting a precedent followed by his great-grandson, the Qianlong emperor. This famous meeting between the Dalai Lama and the Emperor of China in Beijing is illustrated in a wall painting inside the Potala Palace in Lhasa.[5]

The Shunzhi emperor's mother was Mongolian, a circumstance attributable to another Manchu scheme to win the Mongols to their side, namely, intermarriage. Manchu emperors married Mongolians, and Manchu princesses were given in marriage to Mongol princes to make further alliances. The emperor died young, and his mother, a devotee of Tibetan Buddhism, exerted much influence on his heir, the young Kangxi emperor, when he came to the throne.

During the Kangxi period, the Khalkhas of Outer Mongolia were threatened by another Mongol tribe, the Dzungars. In 1691, the Khalkha chieftains, together with the first Jebtsundamba Hutuktu Zanabazar, the highest incarnation of Outer Mongolia, swore allegiance to the Kangxi emperor at Dolonnor (Duolun) in Inner Mongolia.[6] At this time, the emperor was impressed with the diplomatic skills of another *hutuktu,* the Jangjya Hutuktu Ngawang Losang Choden (1642–1714). This man settled differences among some of the Outer Mongolian tribes and was made state preceptor at the Manchu court.

The Kangxi emperor built the resort Bishu shanzhuang in Chengde and went there every summer with his court to hunt and meet with the Mongol, Tibetan, and other minority chieftains. The Mongols and Tibetan dignitaries disliked Beijing because of the heat and the threat of smallpox.[7] Chengde was also a preferable place because, while the court hunted and camped in the nearby Mulan hunting ground, the chieftans could meet with the emperor in

 a more relaxed atmosphere, free of the rigid court etiquette of Beijing. The Kangxi emperor also built monasteries in the outskirts of Chengde, a practice continued by his grandson, the Qianlong emperor.

When the next emperor, the Yongzheng emperor (r. 1723–1736) was still a prince, he was a follower of the Jangjya Hutuktu Ngawang Losang Choden, but, before the prince came to the throne, this *hutuktu* died. His reincarnation, Rolpay Dorje, was only eight years old when the emperor sent soldiers to quell the Mongol insurrection in the Amdo area. In the fighting, the soldiers destroyed many monasteries, including the home of the Jangjya Hutuktu, Gonglung (dGong-lung). The two Qing generals, however, had been instructed by the emperor to look out for the new incarnation, Rolpay Dorje. This they did, and Rolpay Dorje was taken to Beijing in 1724.[8]

For the next ten years, Rolpay Dorje was a classmate of Prince Hongli, the future Qianlong emperor. They pursued daily studies of Chinese, Mongolian, and Manchurian. By 1734, when he was eighteen, Rolpay Dorje was highly proficient in all of these languages as well as Tibetan. The young prince, in turn, studied Buddhist scriptures together with the *hutuktu*. This influence proved important, and the prince became interested in Tibetan Buddhism at an early age. When he came to the throne in 1736, Rolpay Dorje became the Grand Lama of Beijing.

Images of Rolpay Dorje show him wearing the robes of an abbot of the Gelug order. As the incarnation of Manjushri, his attributes are the sword and the book. In the gilt-bronze statue shown in figure 7.1, these attributes rest on lotus blossoms at shoulder level. His right hand is raised in the gesture of argument *(vitarka mudra);* his left hand, with the palm facing upward, is placed above the soles of his feet and carries a vase. A distinguishing physical characteristic, a small mole on his right cheek, is represented in portrait sculpture, but not in pictorial representations.[9]

Rolpay Dorje was a man of many talents, a learned lama and widely published scholar. As an iconographer, he assembled and published at least two Buddhist pantheons, which constituted a very significant contribution to subsequent Buddhist art. For many years, his *Pantheon of Three Hundred Gods (Sku brnyan brgya phrag gsum)* was the chief source of information on Tibetan Buddhist iconography for Western scholars. The other pantheon is *In Praise of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas (Zhufo pusa shengxiang zan),* a book of 360 woodblock prints of Buddhist



Figure 7.1 Image of Rolpay Dorje. Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1736–1795. Gilt bronze (inscription: Enshrined at the Pavilion of Precious Reserves, cast in the Qianlong period). H: 11.1 cm. After The Oriental Art Gallery Limited, *Oriental Works of Art* (London: Oriental Art Gallery, 1994), no. 27.

deities, included in Eugene Clark's *Two Lamaistic Pantheons*.[10] The images in Rolpay Dorje's pantheons had a great influence on Buddhist art during the Qianlong and later periods. For example, the gods illustrated in his *Pantheon* are depicted with jewel-encrusted flaming halos. This type of halo is often found on sculptures and in *thangkas* produced during the Qianlong period. Besides being a great scholar, Rolpay Dorje was an accomplished artist, able to paint, draw, and sculpt. Above all, he was the Qianlong emperor's artistic consultant for all Buddhist matters and chief architect for his monasteries.

The Qianlong emperor loved the arts, and all types of artistic production flourished during his sixty-year reign. He favored rich, ornate, and finely detailed art styles. *Thangkas* struck a particular chord with him, and his patronage of the arts included many works in the Sino-Tibetan style. He took a personal interest in the pieces created in the palace workshops and was involved in every stage of their production. Documents from the Zaoban chu (Imperial Workshop) in the palace reveal him to have been a perfectionist and a hard taskmaster.[11] He made sure that the iconography was correct, seeking advice from lamas in the process. We see this in his query and directive in a document dated the fifteenth day of the second moon, forty-fourth year [1779]: "What is the color of Vajrapani? Have Si De [a eunuch official] consult Jangjya Hutuktu [Rolpay Dorje] and show me the sketches."[12]

One of Rolpay Dorje's architectural projects was the remodeling of Yonghe gong (Palace of Harmony and Peace) in Beijing into a monastery, beginning in 1745. The Yongzheng emperor had resided here as a prince, but according to court regulation, this compound could no longer be used as a private residence once the prince became an emperor. He therefore turned it over to the Buddhist church. The resulting monastery, staffed by Mongolian monks, is still in active worship.

Rolpay Dorje also supervised the building in Chengde of the Putuozongcheng, a replica of the Lhasa Potala Palace. When it was completed in 1771, the Qianlong emperor announced that this temple was to commemorate three events: the Empress Dowager's eightieth birthday that year; the Qianlong emperor's sixtieth birthday, which had occurred the year before; and, most important of all, the return of the Kalmuks, a tribe of Mongols who had left their homeland in earlier centuries for political reasons and settled in what is now Russia. In the Qianlong period, they decided to return to Mongolia to improve their fortunes. Also in 1771, the third Jebtsundamba Hutuktu of Outer Mongolia visited Chengde, and the Qianlong emperor asked him to preach at the dedication ceremony in the Wanfa guiyi dian, the main assembly hall of Putuozongcheng.

This dedication ceremony is illustrated in a painting of great historical significance (fig. 7.2). It shows what took place on the great red terrace that enclosed the twenty-five-meter-high assembly hall. Under the gilt copper roof, the Qianlong emperor is seated on the right; on the left are the kneeling Kalmuks and their leader, Ubasi. They are listening to the sermon given by the third Jebtsundamba Hutuktu. The other lama may be Rolpay Dorje. Western perspective is seen in the foreground, while the background shows traditional Chinese blue-green mountains, colorful clouds, and heavenly beings carrying banners. Palace records tell us that this painting represents the combined efforts of various artists at court.[13] The prominent court artist Yao Wenhan designed it and painted the portrait of the emperor. Ai Qimeng (Ignaz Sichelbart, a Bohemian Jesuit who went to China in 1745) worked on the portraits of the Mongols.[14] Minor Chinese artists and monk painters were responsible for the rest of the figures, architecture, landscape, and clouds.[15]

The Birthday of the Qianlong Emperor and Coming of the Panchen Lama

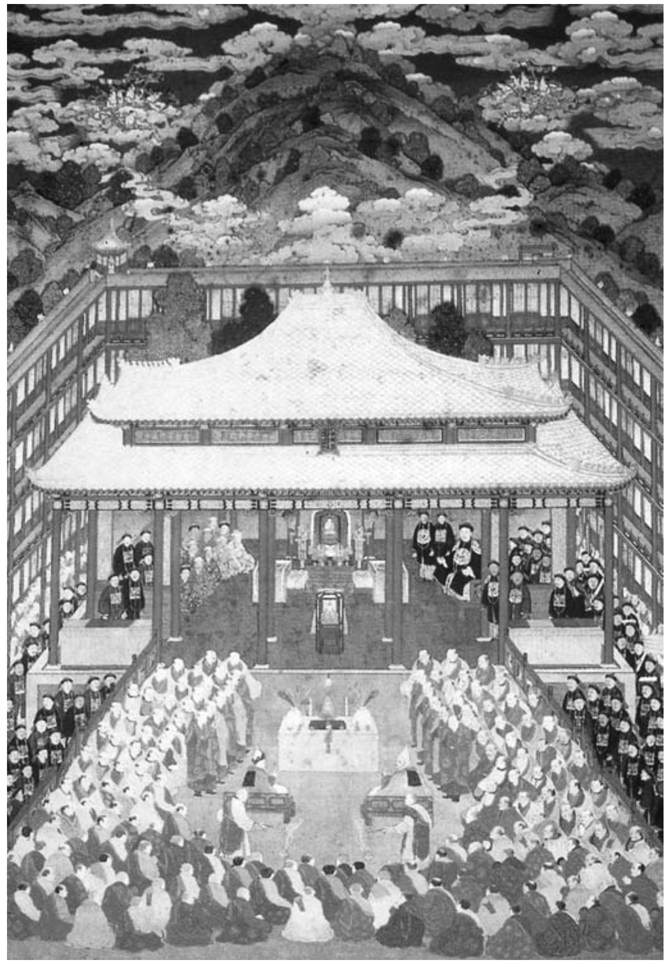


Figure 7.2 Artist unknown, *Third Jebtsundamba Hutuktu Preaching at the Potala at Chengde.* Qing dynasty, Qianlong period, 1771. *Thangka* (hanging scroll), colors on cotton. After *Mountain Manor for Escaping the Summer Heat* (Beijing: People's Fine Art Publishing House), 46.

In the twelfth month of 1778, the Qianlong emperor received wonderful news from Tibet. Through Rolpay Dorje, he heard that the Sixth Panchen Lama, Lobsang Palden Yeshe (Tib. Blo-bzang dPal-ldan Ye-shes; born 1738; enthroned in 1741 at Tashilhunpo), had expressed a wish to be present at the emperor's seventieth birthday celebration in 1780. These were great tidings indeed, as this would be the second most important state visit from Tibet since the coming of the Fifth Dalai Lama to Beijing in 1652. On the sixth day of the twelfth month, the emperor announced the coming visit of the Panchen Lama.

With his usual meticulous attention to detail, the Qianlong emperor personally planned the Panchen Lama's itinerary.[16] Following this itinerary, the lama was to cross the Donggula mountain pass before it became snowbound and spend the winter in Qinghai at Taer si (Kumbum Monastery), the great monastery of the Gelug order and birthplace of its founder, Tsongkhapa. Departing Taer si in the spring of 1780, he would travel through Xining to Inner Mongolia, cross the Yellow River to Guihua (Hothot) and Daihai. At Daihai, the sixth son of the Qianlong emperor and the Jangjya Hutuktu Rolpay Dorje would welcome him. The entourage would then continue to Dolonnor and arrive in Chengde in the seventh month of 1780. The *amban* (Chinese representative of Tibet) was ordered from Lhasa to Tashilhunpo to discuss the trip with the Panchen Lama. And since the journey on horseback would be an arduous one, the emperor ordered a special palanquin sent for the august cleric.

In the sixth month of 1779, the Panchen Lama departed for China with a large entourage. At major stopping points, he was met by Chinese officials bearing gifts from the emperor. He indeed reached Chengde on schedule, on the twenty-first day of the seventh month, 1780.

To commemorate the Sixth Panchen Lama's arrival, court artists painted official portraits of him.[17] Two *thangkas* in the Palace Museum show him wearing religious robes as well as court costume.[18] These formal portraits depict the lama seated in the center of a scene with blue-green landscape and a sky filled with *ruyi* ("as-you-wish" scepter)-shaped clouds,[19] a

setting similar to that found in the birthday *thangkas* to be discussed below. In one of these portraits (fig. 7.3), the Panchen Lama is in full court regalia, wearing court beads, a red shawl, and a yellow robe over a dragon robe. The yellow surcoat implies imperial favor, for only the emperor could wear yellow. The lama's right hand is raised in the preaching *mudra;* the left hand carries a vase. Above him, flanking the Buddha Amitayus, are his predecessor, the Fifth Panchen Lama (right), and Yamantaka (left). Below, from left to right, are three of his protectors: Yama, Mahakala, and Lhamo. Since all three are wrathful deities, the offering placed in front of them is the skull bowl containing the wrathful offering of the five senses (two eyeballs, ears, nose, tongue, and heart). Following the Tibetan convention for lama portraits, the Panchen Lama is shown sitting on a pile of cushions above an elaborate throne. A white silk ceremonial scarf is draped over the back cushion of the throne, and before him is a table holding ritual objects.[20]



Figure 7.3 Artist unknown, *Portrait of the Sixth Panchen Lama.* Qing dynasty, Qianlong period, 1780. *Thangka* (hanging scroll), colors on cotton, 125 x 68 cm. After The Palace Museum, *Cultural Relics of Tibetan Buddhism Collected in the Qing Palace,* no. 12.

As noted above, the Qianlong emperor ordered the construction of the Xumifushou temple for his distinguished guest, following the precedent set by his great-grandfather, who built the Xihuang Monastery for the visit of the Fifth Dalai Lama. No doubt Rolpay Dorje was involved in the planning of Qianlong's temple and its furnishings. It was to be built to the east of the Putuozongcheng, the Potala of Chengde. The emperor decreed that the new complex was to be completed before the fourth month in 1780, in time for monks to move in and store the two thousand pieces of luggage, which would arrive in advance of the Panchen Lama's entourage.[21]

Construction of Xumifushou Temple began in 1779 and was finished in the spring of the following year. Like its model Tashilhunpo, this Chinese version was built on a mountain slope (fig. 7.4). Unlike its Tibetan prototype, however, it was designed like a Chinese monastic complex with a central north-south axis. One enters through a square stone building enclosing a gigantic white marble tortoise that bears on its back a stele engraved with a record (in Chinese, Manchu, Tibetan, and Mongolian) of the Qianlong emperor's founding of the temple.



Figure 7.4 Xumifushou Temple, Chengde, China. After *Mountain Manor for Escaping the Summer Heat* (Beijing: People's Fine Art Publishing House), 48.

From the first building, fifty steps lead up to the *pailou,* an arched gateway with glazed tiles. Beyond is the terrace upon which a stately rectangular stone outer shell in the Tibetan style encloses the Miaogao zhuangyan (Lofty and Solemn) Hall, the main hall. This beautifully decorated temple, covered with a roof of gilt copper ornamented with eight dragons and *makaras,* was designed for the Panchen Lama's use in teaching, meditating, and devotions. The copper roof, like that of his residence, the Jixiang faxi (Auspicious Omen and Joy in the Law) Hall, was gilded twice in accordance with the emperor's command.[22] Two smaller pavilions flank the main hall, the left one for the Panchen Lama, and the right one, the Yuzuo (Royal Throne) Pavilion, for the Qianlong emperor. Only the foundation of the emperor's pavilion survives. Behind the main hall is the building called Wanfa zongyuan (Source of Ten Thousand Laws), the dormitory for the Panchen Lama's entourage.

According to an inventory submitted in the fifth year of the Jiaqing period (1800), the adornments of this temple complex included a large *thangka* illustrating the history of the Panchen Lama, numerous other *thangkas* and statues, and many sets of *wugong* (an incense burner, two candlesticks, and two vases).[23] In the main hall alone, there were eighteen *thangkas* of Buddhist images on the west side of the middle level and three *thangkas* on the top level. There were eighty-four *thangkas* on the two floors of the Royal Throne Pavilion, where the throne for the Qianlong emperor was installed. On the north side of this pavilion were five *thangkas* of Amitayus and five illustrating the life of Shakyamuni. The altar held twelve bronze images and two sets of glass *wugong* ornaments. Embroidered *thangkas* of Lhamo and the eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara were hung in the Jixiang faxi Hall, the Panchen's palace.

The Fate of the Art of the Xumifushou Temple

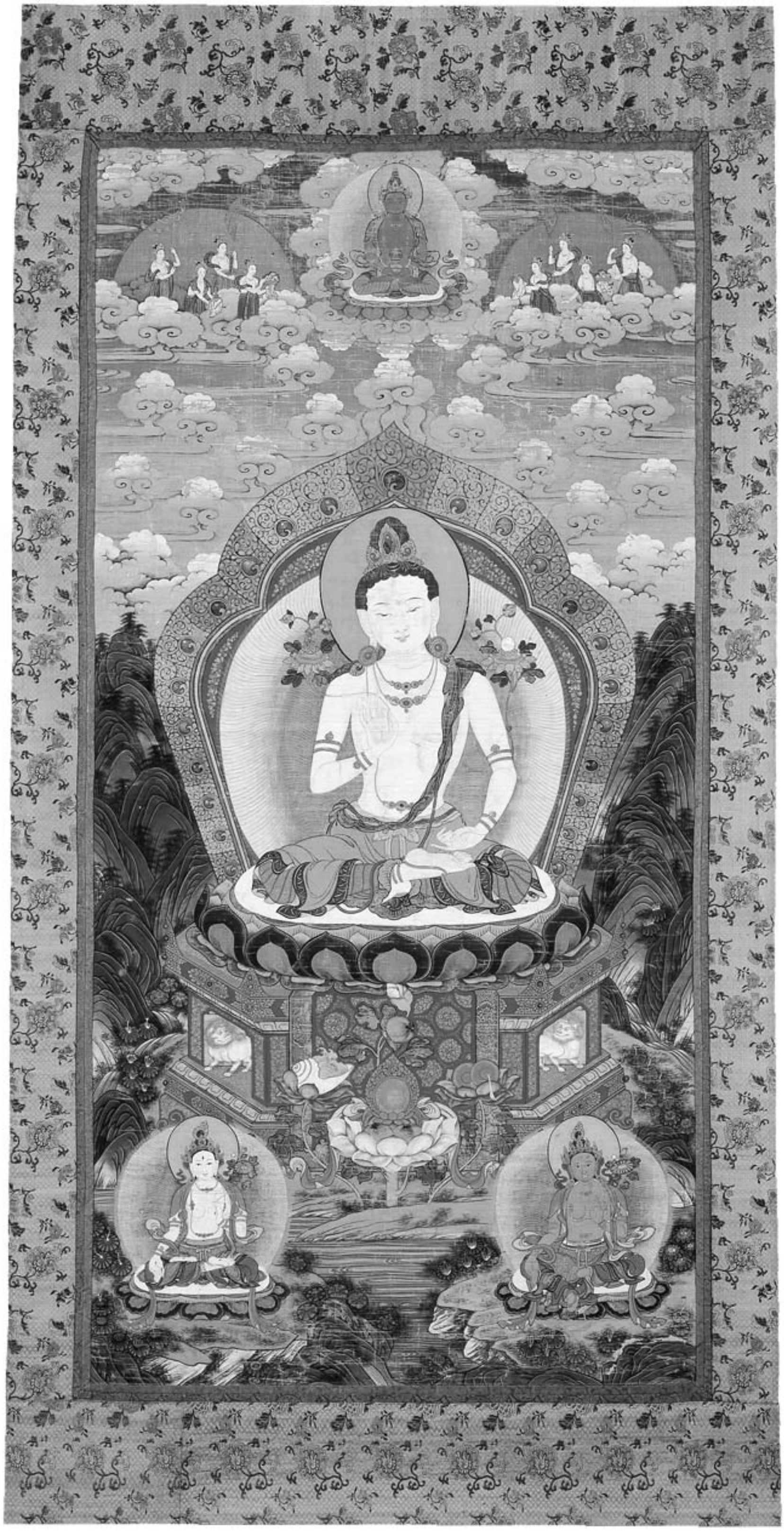
Except for the large sculptures and some wall paintings, the images that belonged to the temple built in 1780 for the Sixth Panchen Lama have been scattered. When the Japanese occupied northeastern China in the 1930s and 1940s, the Japanese scholar Henmi Baiei visited the palaces and temples of Chengde every summer between 1939 and 1941. He took copious notes and documented his findings with photographs, which he published in 1943.[24] His photographs and research are extremely important to the study of Sino-Tibetan art, since most of the contents of the temples of Chengde are no longer in situ as a result of years of war and unrest.



Figure 7.5 Artist unknown, *Suvikranta Jina.* Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1779–1780. *Thangka* (hanging scroll), colors on cotton, 143.5 x 75 cm. Reproduced from Henmi Baiei, *Chūgoku Ramakyō bijutsu taikan* (Tokyo: Tokyo bijutsu, 1975), pl. 552.

Among the *thangkas* photographed by Henmi Baiei are seventeen large examples that, judging from their iconography, belonged to the same set. They depict standing or seated buddhas and bodhisattvas, including different forms of Avalokiteshvara, Amitayus, and some of the thirty-five Buddhas of Confession. Representative is the image of Suvikranta Jina (fig. 7.5), who wields the sword that severs the clouds of ignorance. Like other deities in the set, he is shown against a blue-green landscape with *ruyi*-shaped clouds and is accompanied by

Figure 7.6
Artist unknown, *Samantabhadra.* Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1779–1780. *Thangka* (hanging scroll), colors on cotton, 143.5 x 75 cm. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. The Avery Brundage Collection.



Amitayus above and the White and Green Taras below. When photographed, these *thangkas* had already been removed from the temples. Henmi Baiei stated that some were in the Shenyang Museum and others were kept in the storage area at Chengde. When I visited Shenyang Museum and the temples of Chengde in 1988, these *thangkas* were no longer there.

The Birthday *Thangkas*



Figure 7.7 Detail of Figure 7.6; inscription.

The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco has three large *thangkas* that are iconographically similar to those published by Henmi Baiei, though the central deities are different. When I first studied the museum's *thangkas,* I was certain that they had come from Chengde.

The Samantabhadra *thangka* (fig. 7.6) presents the bodhisattva as a youthful deity bearing two lotus blossoms supporting the thunderbolt and the moon.[25] He sits on a white moon disk above a lotus pedestal supported by an elaborate throne with lions. (In Tibetan iconography, peaceful deities sit on moon disks colored white; yellow sun disks support wrathful deities.) The iconography of the rest of the painting is identical to that of the *thangkas* photographed by Henmi Baiei. Samantabhadra appears against a blue-green landscape.[26] Before his throne are offerings of the five senses supported on lotus blossoms springing from the water below. (These offerings, for peaceful deities, consist of a mirror for sight, cymbals for sound, a conch containing curds for smell, fruit for taste, and a piece of silk for touch.) Below are the Green and White Taras; above is Amitayus, the Buddha of Infinite Life, holding his special attribute, the vase of life with a tree growing from it.

Amitayus, or Wuliang shou fo in Chinese, is of supreme importance in China because he is believed to be the Buddha who bestows long life. His Chinese name alone would support this notion, for *"wuliang shou"* means "boundless longevity." His presence was a must on imperial birthdays during the Qing dynasty. As auspicious and celebratory objects, images of Amitayus could clearly perform noniconic functions such as those described by T. Griffith Foulk in the opening essay of this book. Thousands of Amitayus figures were given, for instance, to the mother of the Qianlong emperor during her sixtieth, seventieth, and eightieth birthday celebrations. The Asian Art Museum has a gilt bronze image of Amitayus dated 1770 that was specially commissioned for her eightieth birthday. The Qianlong emperor not only commissioned Amitayus images, he also received them as gifts. On one birthday, he was given 19,934 statues of this buddha.[27] The presence of Amitayus in the Samantabhadra *thangka* indicates that it was associated with a birthday. The question is, Whose birthday?

When the mounting of the Samantabhadra *thangka* was unstitched, an inscription was discovered on the back of the painting, across the top (fig. 7.7).[28] It informs us that the *thangka* originally hung in the main reception hall of Wanfa zongyuan, the building in the Xumifushou

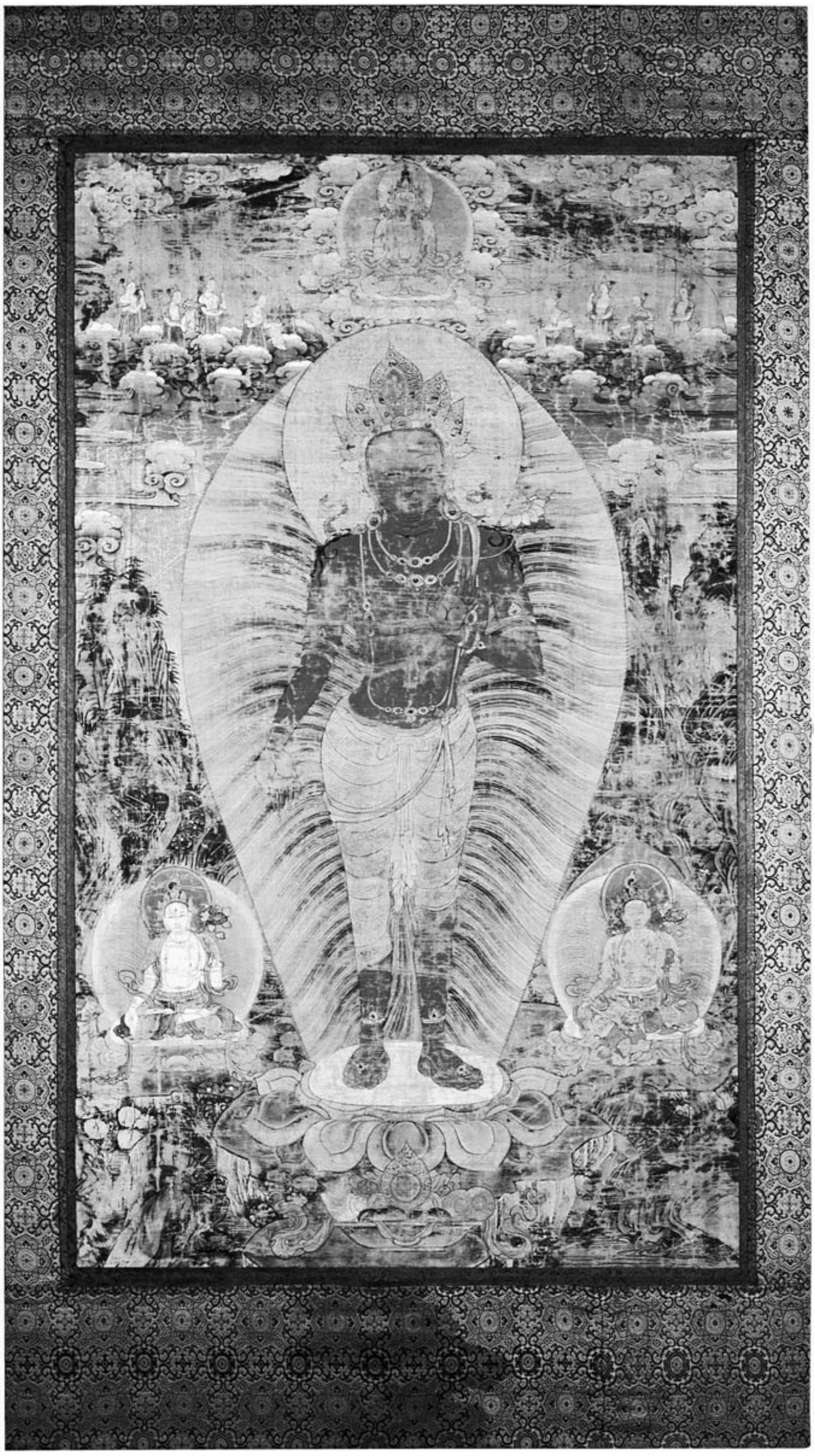


Figure 7.8 Artist unknown, *Padmapani.* Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1779–1780. *Thangka* (hanging scroll), colors on cotton, 129.5 x 75 cm. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. The Avery Brundage Collection.

Temple complex that once housed the Sixth Panchen Lama's entourage.

After the discovery of this inscription, I decided to open up another of the museum's *thangkas,* that of the red Padmapani (fig. 7.8). The large standing figure in the center of this *thangka* carries a lotus supporting a water vessel. The accompanying deities and blue-green background are similar to those in the Samantabhadra *thangka*. The inscription in the center of the top edge (fig. 7.9) tells us that it was the fifth of nine scrolls hung under the back eaves on the second floor of the Royal Throne Pavilion, the Qianlong emperor's palace in the Xumifushou complex.[29] Looted and burned in the early twentieth century, this building no longer exists.



Figure 7.9 Detail of Figure 7.8; inscription.

A third *thangka* in the Asian Art Museum depicts Ratnasambhava, one of the five Tathagatas, conceived as a yellow buddha seated with his left hand in the gesture of meditation and right hand in the gesture of giving (fig. 7.10). He is surrounded by a flaming mandorla with jewels, as seen in the *Pantheon of Three Hundred Gods* designed by Rolpay Dorje, which is not surprising, because he must have been the mastermind behind this set of *thangkas*. A short inscription in the upper left corner of this *thangka* identifies the subject as Bao shengfo, wufang (Buddha of precious birth, five directions). Thus we know this Ratnasambhava once belonged to a set of five buddhas, the others being Vairocana, Akshobhya, Amoghasiddhi, and Amitabha. The inscription does not give the scroll's original location, but its style and iconography leave no doubt that it is also a birthday *thangka* from the Xumifushou Temple.

At the top of the Ratnasambhava *thangka,* as in our other examples, two groups of heavenly attendants, holding banners and offerings, float on clouds just below and to either side of the image of Amitayus. Unlike the other examples, however, an attendant on the left carries pendants in the form of a swastika and the character *"shou,"* meaning "long life" (fig. 7.11). The swastika was a good-luck symbol introduced into China from India. In 693 Empress Wu recognized it as the source of all auspiciousness, and it was given the pronunciation *"wan."*[30] The Chinese word for ten thousand or infinity is also pronounced *"wan"* and is therefore a homonym. The combination of a swastika and *"shou"* represents a wish for *"wanshou"*—that the recipient will live for ten thousand years. This was a typical birthday wish for an emperor or an empress, as well as a popular rebus used on decorative objects at the Ming and Qing courts. The presence of the *wanshou* rebus proves beyond a doubt that this is indeed a *thangka* commissioned for the Qianlong emperor's seventieth birthday in 1780.

Following court tradition, these birthday *thangkas* would have been ordered by the emperor, painted by monk artists *(hua lama),* and mounted by the craftsmen of the Imperial



Figure 7.10 Artist unknown, *Ratnasambhava.* Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1779–1780. *Thangka* (hanging scroll), colors on cotton, 133 x 82 cm. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. The Avery Brundage Collection.



Figure 7.11 Detail of figure 7.10; attendant holding *wanshou* ornament.

Workshop. The mounting consists of yellow brocade with two narrow strips of red and blue brocade next to the *thangka*. The use of thick brocade for mounting *thangkas* is a Tibetan custom. Tibetan *thangkas,* however, are sewn with a thin dust cover, and the bottom mounting flares outward. The birthday *thangkas,* in contrast, have straight sides and no dust covers, in the Chinese fashion. Of the three, the Samantabhadra *thangka* is in the best condition. The back is covered with a piece of imperial yellow silk, further proof that it was manufactured in the palace.

Now that the provenance of the three birthday *thangkas* has been established, other *thangkas* from the Xumifushou Temple of Chengde are coming to light. A private collector in Southern California has a standing image of a green Padmapani, which may belong to the same set as the Asian Art Museum's Padmapani *thangka*. The Folkens Museum Etnografiska of Stockholm has two unpublished *thangkas* showing two of the Thirty-five Buddhas of Confession, which can be linked to the ones shown in the Japanese photographs. The Tibet Collection Frey, Zurich, owns a Cittavisraman Avalokitesvara *thangka* from the temple (fig. 7.12).[31] And a 1995 Christie's sale catalogue presents yet another example (fig. 7.13).[32] This one shows a red, seated Ratnapani, and may be part of the set of Eight Bodhisattvas to which the Asian Art Museum's Samantabhadra belongs. Finally, an Amitayus *thangka* (fig. 7.14) in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art is identical to one photographed by Henmi Baiei in Jehol.[33] The red central image of this *thangka,* a larger version of the smaller Amitayus in the sky, sits in meditation and carries the vase containing the elixir of life. The 1800 inventory of Xumifushou Temple mentioned above states that there were five Amitayus *thangkas* hanging on the north side of Royal Throne Pavilion. The Amitayus *thangka* of the Nelson-Atkins Museum and the one photographed by Henmi Baiei may account for two of them.

Postscript: The Death of the Sixth Panchen Lama

The Sixth Panchen Lama stayed at Xumifushou Temple in Chengde for just about a month, then returned with the emperor to Beijing to reside at the Xihuang Monastery built there for the Fifth Dalai Lama's visit in 1652. Unfortunately, the Panchen Lama caught the dreaded smallpox and died in the eleventh month of 1780, to the great consternation of the Qianlong emperor. Among other works, the emperor had cast a large, gilt-silver, portrait sculpture of the Panchen Lama (presently on display in the Palace in Peace and Harmony in Beijing) and a golden stupa to hold his embalmed body (now enclosed in a large silver stupa in Tashilhunpo



Figure 7.12 Artist unknown, *Cittavisramana Avalokiteshvara.* Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1779–1780. *Thangka* (hanging scroll), colors on cotton, 130 x 77 cm. Courtesy of Tibet Collection, Frey, Zurich.



Figure 7.13 Artist unknown, *Ratnapani.* Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1779–1780. *Thangka* (hanging scroll), colors on cotton, 144 x 71 cm. Copyright: Christie's Amsterdam, B.V.



Figure 7.14 Artist unknown, *Amitayus.* Qing dynasty, Qianlong period 1779–1780. *Thangka* (hanging scroll), colors on cotton, 142 x 65.4 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri (Gift of Stanley L. Handforth in memory of Thomas S. Handforth).

Monastery, Tibet). For the lama's relics, the emperor erected the Great Stupa of Purity near the Xihuang Monastery in 1782. Although the Panchen Lama's visit to China ended tragically, it left a rich aesthetic legacy: beautiful monuments in Chengde and Beijing, and outstanding *thangkas* now in collections all over the world.

Notes

1. See also Terese Tse Bartholomew, "Three Thangkas from Chengde," *Tibetan Studies, Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies,* Narita 1989 (Narita: Naritasan Shinshoji, 1992), 2:353–359; "Sino-Tibetan Art of the Qianlong Period from the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco," *Orientations,* June 1991, 34–45; "Thangkas of the Qianlong Period," in *Tibetan Art: Towards a Definition of Style: The Arts of Tibet,* ed. Jane Casey Singer and Philip Denwood (London: Laurence King, 1997), 104–117.
2. In Europe and the United States this *hutuktu* is referred to as the second Jangjya. This essay follows the Chinese system, but not to confuse the issue, here he will simply be known as Rolpay Dorje.
3. Zhang Yuxin, *Qing zhengfu yu lama jiao* (The Qing government and the lama religion) (Henan: Xicang renmin chubanshe 1988), 8.
4. Patricia Berger, "Preserving the Nation: The Political Uses of Tantric Art in China," in *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism 850–1850,* ed. Marsha Weidner (Lawrence Kan.: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, in association with University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), 110–111.
5. Cultural Relics Administration Committee, Tibet Autonomous Region, *The Potala Palace of Tibet* (China/Shanghai: Joint Publishing Company [Hong Kong Branch] and Shanghai People's Art Publishing Home 1982), pl. 45.
6. Wan Yi, Wang Shuqing, and Liu Lu, *Qingdai gongting shi* (History of the Qing Palace) (Shengyang: Liaoning People's Press, 1990), 116.
7. Zhang Yuxin, *Qing zhengfu yu lama jiao,* 54.
8. Tuguan Luosang Queji Nima, *Zhangjia guoshi Ruobi Duoji chuan* (Biography of Rolpay Dorje), trans. Chen Qingying and Ma Lianlong (Beijing: Minority Press, 1988), 55–63.
9. Images of Rolpay Dorje are in the following museums: Chang Foundation in Taipei, Taiwan; Hermitage, St. Petersburg; Palace Museum, Beijing; and Staten Island Museum of Tibetan Art, New York. Published images can be found in Marylin Rhie and Robert A. F. Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion: The Sacred Art of Tibet* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco; New York: Tibet House and Harry N. Abrams, 1991), cat. no. 100; Palace Museum, Beijing, *Cultural Relics of Tibetan Buddhism Collected in the Qing Palace (Qinggong Zangchuan fojiao wenwu)* (Beijing: Forbidden City Press, Woods Publishing, 1992), nos. 13 and 36.
10. Walter Eugene Clark, *Two Lamaistic Pantheons,* Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series, vols. 3 and 4 (Cambridge: Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1937).
11. For example, regarding the wax models of statues he was inspecting prior to casting, the Qianlong emperor ordered the craftsmen to "move the lotus pedestal of Samantabhadra one inch forward, and move Manjushri forward half an inch" (document dated ninth day of the eleventh moon, forty-first year [1776]). Wang Jiapeng, "Zhangjia Hutuketu xiang xiaokao" (A study on the portrait statue of Jangjyu Hutuktu), *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 4 (1987): 89.
12. Ibid., 48.
13. Yang Boda, *Qingdai Yuanhua* (Beijing: Forbidden City Press, 1993), 74–75. See also Patricia Berger, "After Xanadu: The Mongol Renaissance of the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries," in *Mongolia: The Legacy of Chinggis Khan,* ed. Patricia Berger and Teresa Tse Bartholomew (Hong Kong: Thames and Hudson in association with Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1995), 68.
14. Sichelbart had worked with Castiglione and the French Jesuit Jean-Denis Attiret, both of whom by this time had passed away.
15. This painting is evidence of the division of labor among palace artists in the production of religious images. Besides the court artists who worked at Ruyi guan, the painting workshop, there were also monk artists, called *hua lama,* who resided in Zhongcheng (Central Uprightness) Hall in the northwestern por-

tion of the palace complex (which burned in 1923). The *hua lama* of Zhongcheng Hall not only painted *thangkas,* but also made wax models of sculptures and assisted the craftsmen of the Imperial Workshop and court artists of Ruyi guan in joint projects.

16. Chen Jiangyi and Guo Meilan, "Liushi Banchan Chengde rujin shulun" (An account of the Sixth Panchen Lama's visit to Chengde), in *Qingdai gongshi qiushi* (In search of truth: A history of the Qing palace), ed. Qingdai gongshi yenjiuhui (Beijing: Forbidden City Press, 1992), 146–149. An identical article with a slightly different title, "Liushi Banchan Chengde rujin shulue" (A summary of the Sixth Panchen Lama's visit to Chengde), appears in *Zhongguo zangxue (China Tibetology)* 4 (1992): 58–68.
17. On the twenty-sixth day of the seventh month, the court painter Lu Can was ordered to report to Beijing at the end of the ninth month and the beginning of the tenth month to paint the Lama's portrait. Zhongguo diyi lishi dangan guan and Zhongguo zangxue yanjiu zhongxin, *Liushi banchan zhaojin dangan xuanbian* (A selection of documents relating to the visit of the Sixth Panchen Lama) (Beijing: Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 1996), 238, document no. 334.
18. Palace Museum, *Cultural Relics of Tibetan Buddhism Collected in the Qing Palace* (Beijing: Forbidden City Press and Woods Publishing, 1992), cat. nos. 11–1, 12–1.
19. A symbol of wish fulfillment used in Buddhist and other types of Chinese art.
20. Some of the objects in the painting, such as the alms bowl, skull bowl, incense burner, and rhinoceros horn, were given hardwood stands, following Chinese custom. The Qianlong emperor was very particular about hardwood stands, which he had made by a special department within the Imperial Workshop. Even Castiglione was ordered to design stands for European objects of art.
21. Chen and Guo, "Liushi Banchan Chengde," 144.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., 143.
24. Henmi Baiei, *Man Mō Hokushi no Shūkyō Bijutsu* (Religious art of the Mongols and Manchus) (Tokyo: Maruzen kabushiki kaisha, 1943). These photographs were republished in *Chūgoku Ramakyō bijutsu taikan* (A comprehensive view of lamaistic art in China) (Tokyo: Tokyo bijutsu, 1975), nos. 544, 508, 521–531, 543, 545, 552, 561, 562.
25. Berger, "Preserving the Nation," 118, no. 33 (misidentified as Ratnasambhava).
26. Beginning in the Dunhuang frescoes in the Northern Wei period, Buddhist subjects have often been placed in blue-green landscape backgrounds in Chinese paintings. Tibetans copied this Chinese style; then, when the Chinese painted *thangkas,* they in turn copied the Tibetans. In recent years a number of Chinese lohan paintings dating to the Yongle period (1403–1424) have come out of Tibet and appeared in the art market. These pictures display the traditional blue-green landscape style employed by Chinese court painters in the Ming dynasty. Given as gifts to the head lamas of the different sects, these paintings no doubt influenced Tibetan paintings of the succeeding periods, such as those of Karmagadri school of painting. The *thangka* from Chengde painted by the *hua lama* of the palace, however, is more stylized: the mountains seem to follow a formula and lack the degree of individualization seen in the Ming dynasty examples.
27. Such a volume of production can be explained by casting methods. Reusable molds allowed the production of large series of images. See Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications, 1981), 536.
28. It reads "Wanfa zongyuan jianren zhengsuo beilouxia disanjin mingwujian'nei dongxi banqiangshang liuzhou" (Sixth scroll, east and west wooden walls, below the northern pavilion, main reception area of Wanfa zongyuan).
29. It reads "Yuzuolou beilou shangceng disanjin mingsanjian'nei houyan jiuzhou, wu" (This is the fifth among the nine scrolls under the back eaves, in the second floor of the north pavilion, inside the Yuzuolou).
30. Li Zhongyuan, *Wenshi diangu* (Motifs and allusions) (Shenyang: Liaoning Education Press, 1990), 123.
31. I am grateful to Ulrich von Schroeder for bringing this *thangka* to my attention.
32. Amsterdam B. V. sale (October 18, 1995, lot no. 298).
33. Henmi Baiei, *Chūgoku Ramakyō bijutsu taikan*, no. 508.

8

Beijing's Zhihua Monastery: History and Restoration in China's Capital

Kenneth J. Hammond

ON THE EAST SIDE OF BEIJING, just inside the Second Ring Road, across from the International Post Office and hidden behind a cluster of high-rise apartment blocks, there is a walled compound of black-tile-roofed buildings. In the winter of 1986, when as a student exploring the alleys and out-of-the-way corners of the city I first visited the site, it was in disrepair, and a sign on the gate forbade entry to the public. A sincere conversation with the gatekeeper overcame that prohibition, and within I found the remaining buildings of the Monastery of Transforming Wisdom, Zhihua si. With a history of some 550 years and its main buildings essentially intact, the monastery is one of the great architectural treasures of the city. The buildings have now been restored to their original Ming-dynasty appearance, and the site is open to the public, but not as a Buddhist monastery; instead it houses a historical museum, a school of traditional music, and the offices of a cultural travel service. While lacking the grand scale of the former Imperial Palace or the spectacular painting program of the suburban Fahai Monastery (Monastery of the Sea of the Law), Zhihua Monastery is the best preserved example of early-Ming monastic architecture in Beijing.[1]

In his dissertation "Peking under the Ming," James Geiss wrote, "The history of the city and its environs was largely shaped by emperors and by their courts, their ministers, and their favorites."[2] This essay will trace the history of Zhihua Monastery and argue that the fortunes of this monastery, like the city around it, remained closely tied to the power and policies of the governments based in Beijing, whether of the imperial state or its successors.

The first section of this study is a description of the monastery based on site visits, beginning in 1986 and continuing through the period of the monastery's restoration in the 1990s. The second covers the history of the monastery from its founding in the midfifteenth century to the end of the Republican period in the midtwentieth. The final section deals with the restoration work and the modern fate of the monastery as a "cultural relic" and an institution seeking to survive and adapt to the changing conditions of China today.

The basic source for the history of Zhihua Monastery remains Liu Dunzhen's site report for the Architectural Survey of China, published in the journal *Zhongguo yingzao xueshe huikan* (Bulletin of the Society for Research in Chinese Architecture) in 1934.[3] For information on the monastery since Liu's report, I have relied primarily on interviews conducted between

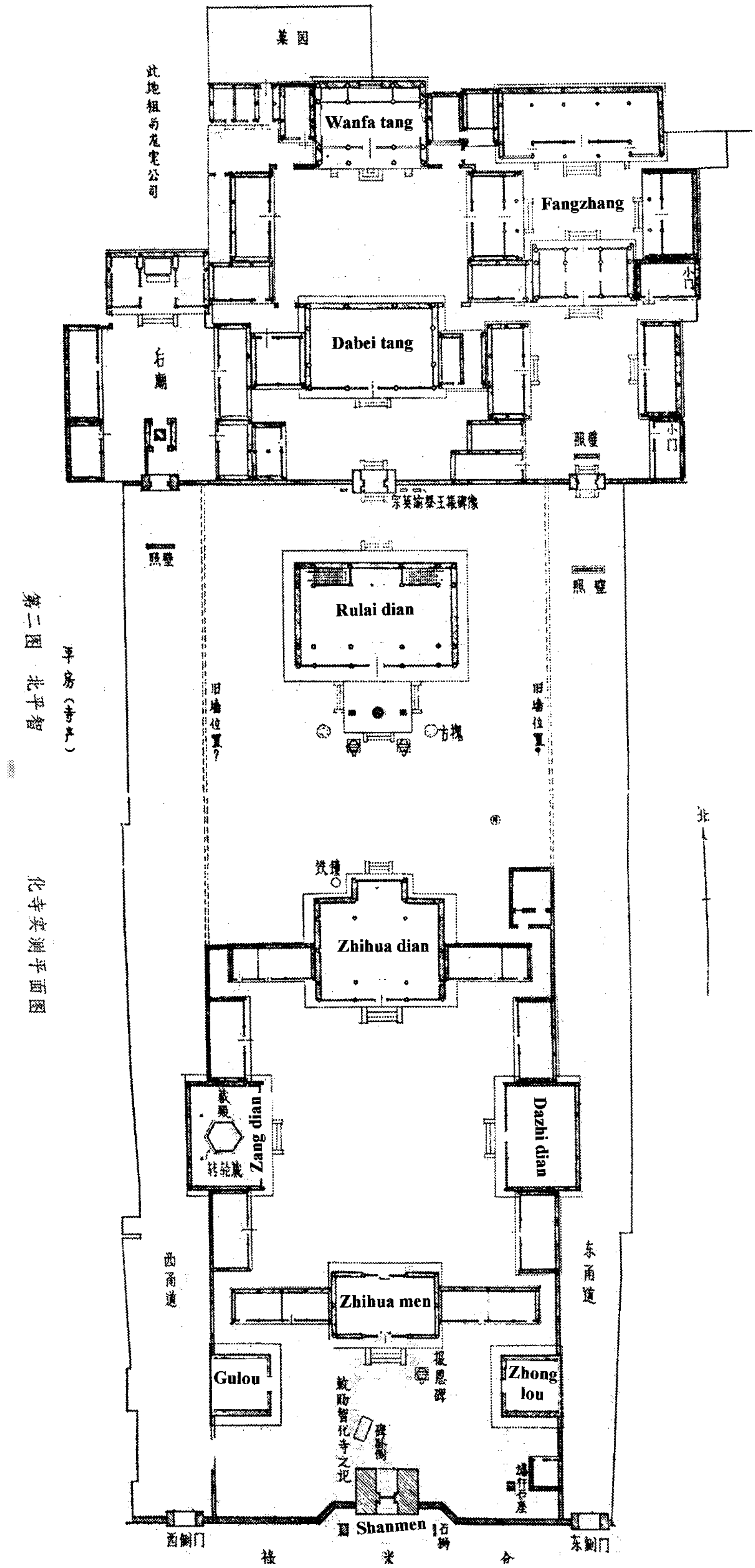


Figure 8.1 Ground plan of Zhihua Monastery, Beijing. Ming dynasty. After Liu Dunzhen, *Liu Dunzhen wen ji* (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 1982), 66–67.

1986 and 1995 with Yang Wenshu, director of the Zhihua Monastery Preservation Group; Liang Yuquan, vice-director; An Jiuliang, who succeeded Yang as director in 1991; and Zhang Xinsheng of the Cultural Relics International Travel Service. On the unique musical heritage of Zhihua Monastery, I was able to interview Kang Qing of the Beijing Buddhist Music Association and Sun Suhua of the Beijing Zhihua Monastery Musical Troupe. I am also grateful to the late Laurence Sickman for his letter recounting his acquisition in 1930 of the monastery's coffered ceiling now installed in the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City.

Description

Zhihua Monastery is at the east end of Lumicang hutong, in the East City district. It is just west of the ring road that runs along the line of the old city wall, about equidistant from the former Chaoyang and Jianguo gates. In the Ming dynasty, this area was the Huanghua fang. A military school was just west of the monastery, and the granary for storing tribute rice was beyond that. As it currently exists, Zhihua Monastery covers about 58,000 square feet, with a frontage of 130 feet on the street and a depth of a little over 445 feet. Like most monasteries, it is oriented on a north-south axis, with the main buildings facing south (fig. 8.1).

Originally three gates in the wall separated the compound from the street outside. Only the central gate *(shanmen)* (fig. 8.2) was regularly used. The other two, which were normally closed, gave access to alleys leading to the rear of the temple, on the east to the abbot's quarters and on the west to monks' housing. These two gates and alleys no longer exist. Now on the east side are single-story houses for neighborhood residents; on the west is a small lane leading past the temple compound. The residence of the monastery's founder, Wang Zhen (d. 1449), formerly stood beyond the western alley. It may have been destroyed in the 1450s when his property was seized and his relations killed.

The monastery compound was originally somewhat larger than it is now. A meditation hall, dormitory, kitchen, and other functional rooms, as well as the abbot's quarters *(fangzhang),* were at the rear. These are either no longer standing or have been separated from



Figure 8.2 Front gate *(shanmen),* Zhihua Monastery, Beijing. Ming dynasty. Photograph: Hammond.

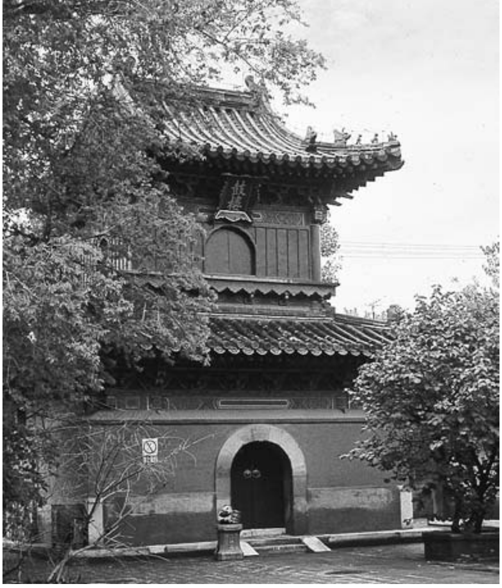


Figure 8.3 Drum tower *(gulou),* Zhihua Monastery, Beijing. Ming dynasty. Photograph: Weidner.

the monastery and converted to other uses. The abbot's quarters, for instance, were turned into a school in the 1920s. Restored in 1992–1993, they today serve as the headquarters for the travel service.

The ground level within the monastery is now about three feet lower than the roadway in front of it. Just outside the gate, flanking it on either side, are two rather inelegantly carved stone lions. The gray brick gate itself is somewhat narrow, with an arched entryway. The roof tiles, like those on the main buildings throughout the monastery, are black.[4] To the right of the archway and fixed on the wall, a marker dated 1961 and issued by the State Council proclaims Zhihua Monastery a protected cultural relic of national importance.

Just inside the gate lies the first of the three courtyards still in existence at Zhihua Monastery.[5] On the east and west sides of this courtyard stand the bell and drum towers *(zhong, gulou)* (fig. 8.3), two-story, red-painted, wooden structures, with lower levels enclosed by plastered brick walls. Their arched entrances are sealed, so the interiors are not accessible. The bell from the bell tower has been removed.[6] The main hall of the courtyard, the Gate of Transforming Wisdom (Zhihua men), stands to the north (fig. 8.4) on a stone platform, with smaller halls on either side. Measuring about forty by twenty-four feet, it was formerly the Hall of the Heavenly Kings (Tianwang dian) and housed statues of these four deities. The



Figure 8.4 Gate of Transforming Wisdom (Zhihua men), Zhihua Monastery, Beijing. Ming dynasty. Photograph: Hammond.



Figure 8.5 Hall of Great Wisdom (Dazhi dian), Zhihua Monastery, Beijing. Ming dynasty. Photograph: Weidner.

statues were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. The building is to become an exhibition hall for the restored monastery, with displays on its history. In front of the hall are two steles, one of which dates to 1444, recounting the founding of the monastery.

Behind the Gate of Transforming Wisdom is the second courtyard. Three major buildings face this area on the east, west, and north. Each is raised on a stone platform and flanked by smaller side halls. On the east side is the Hall of Great Wisdom (Dazhi dian) (fig. 8.5). Measuring about forty by twenty-eight feet, it is slightly larger than the Gate of Transforming Wisdom. By the time of Liu Dunzhen's investigation, temple monks had already restored the internal painted beams. The ceiling from this hall was removed in 1930 and is now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

On the west side of the yard is the Scripture Hall (Zang dian), which has the same external dimensions as the Hall of Great Wisdom. The interior, however, is quite different; it houses one of the monastery's treasures, a hexagonal sutra cabinet. This wooden case stands on a hexagonal stone base, about three feet high, carved in the form of a lotus platform. Around the top edge, intricate, incised floral patterns are interspersed with the eight symbols of the Buddhist faith. The platform is widest at the top, narrows in the middle to the band decorated with clouds, dragons, and flaming pearls, then broadens again at the bottom, though not as much as at the top. At each corner, squatting on the ledge between the base and the band of clouds and dragons, a caryatid supports the broad top of the platform on its shoulder.

The cabinet itself, which is stationary despite Liu Dunzhen's description of it as a "revolving sutra cabinet" *(zhuanlun zang),* is decorated with numerous energetically carved figures. A Buddha seated on a lotus adorns each of the 270 wooden drawers for holding the rolled



Figure 8.6 Ceiling of the Scripture Hall (Zang dian), Zhihua Monastery, Beijing. Ming dynasty. Photograph: Hammond.

copies of sutras. Wooden posts at each corner of the cabinet are topped with elephant heads, the trunks raised in an S curve. High-relief panels between the posts depict, in ascending order, an elephant, a lion, and a winged goatlike creature (a qilin?), each on a lotus platform. The elephant and lion are commonly associated with the bodhisattvas Puxian (Samantabhadra) with Wenshu (Manjushri), respectively. A guardian deity appears at the top, amid swirling clouds, raising his right hand and holding a *vajra*-like sword in his left.

Surmounting the cabinet on each side, again amid a profusion of swirling clouds, is a Garuda figure flanked by two nagas. This Garuda is one of the more unusual features at Zhihua Monastery. Coming from Hindu mythology and iconography, it is a common image in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, but not widely found in northern Chinese Buddhist temples. It seems likely that the presence of Garuda imagery at the monastery is related to the legacy of Mongol patronage of Tibetan Buddhism during the Yuan period and the further embrace of Tibetan tantrism under the Yongle emperor in the early fifteenth century. Garudas appear in Yuan period carvings at the Juyong Gate, northwest of Beijing, and in the Biyun Monastery in the Western Hills outside the city. The specific source for the Zhihua Monastery Garuda motif, however, remains unclear.

Over the sutra cabinet is the caisson ceiling *(zaojing)* composed of a square lower section, sloping panels that form a truncated pyramid, and, in the square at the top, a circle containing a carved dragon among swirling clouds, its head forming the central point of the ceiling. Each of the sloping panels is painted with five reasonably well preserved gold medallions containing images of red-robed buddhas seated on lotus thrones (fig. 8.6). Each has a different *mudra* (symbolic hand gesture). The medallions are set on a green background, with white clouds scattered about them.[7]

The northern hall in the second courtyard is the Hall of Transforming Wisdom (Zhihua



Figure 8.7 Hall of Transforming Wisdom (Zhihua dian), Zhihua Monastery, Beijing. Ming dynasty. Photograph: Weidner.

dian) (fig. 8.7). About forty-eight feet across, it is slightly wider than the halls to the east and west, but it is much deeper, about forty feet. A small porch on the back makes this the only ceremonial hall in the complex with both front and rear entrances. The caisson ceiling from this hall has been removed, and the space it occupied has not been filled. This hall formerly contained statues of the eighteen lohans; only two remain, one of which has been damaged. The large statue of the Buddha once on the image platform has also been lost. The most artistically important aspect of this hall today is an original Ming painting of Guanyin on the rear of the screen wall at the back of the hall (fig. 8.8). Holding a spear and a pearl, the bodhisattva sits on a lotus resting on the

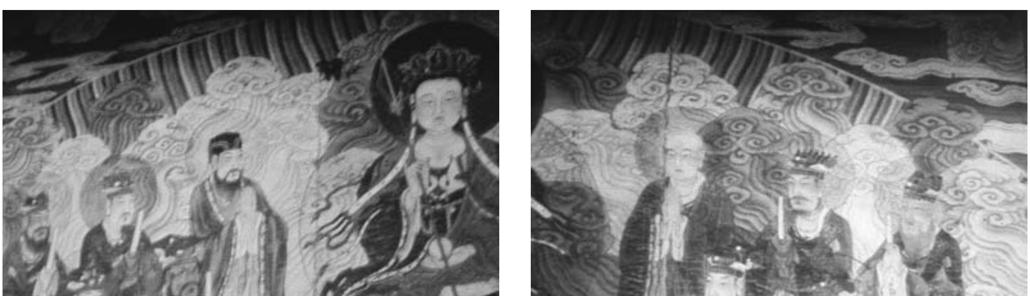


Figure 8.8 Mural of Guanyin from the Hall of Transforming Wisdom, Zhihua Monastery, Beijing. Ming dynasty. Photograph: Hammond.

back of a dragon. Guanyin is accompanied by groups of heavenly officials (though on the right-hand side one appears to be a monk), standing in ranks to either side and holding their tablets in front of them. The background is a mass of swirling clouds. A rainbowlike band of multicolored vertical stripes arcs over the scene, with a more skylike mix of blue and clouds above it. In composition and in figural style, this mural might be compared to the famous wall paintings at Fahai Monastery, but the paint is much less heavily applied and has none of the raised golden outlines and details found there.

Behind the Hall of Transforming Wisdom is the final remaining courtyard of the temple. The main hall of Zhihua Monastery, the Buddha Hall (Rulai dian), also known as the Pavilion of Ten Thousand Buddhas (Wanfo ge), stands on the north side (fig. 8.9). This is a two-story building, measuring about sixty by forty feet on the ground floor, constructed of plastered brick painted red. A wooden balustrade surrounds the second floor; below it hangs a scrollwork facade that screens the bracketing from view. On the second level, entrance to the hall is through three stone arches, the central one being larger than the other two. The facade of the ground floor features latticework wooden screens that continue across the folding doors of the central bay. Before the hall are two steles, the inscriptions of which have unfortunately worn away, and an incense burner presented by He Kan in 1592.

Figure 8.9 Buddha Hall (Rulai dian), or Pavilion of Ten Thousand Buddhas (Wanfo ge), Zhihua Monastery, Beijing. Ming dynasty. Photograph: Weidner.



The caisson ceiling in the Nelson-Atkins Museum came from the upper story of this hall, but much of interest remains in the building. The walls on the ground level are lined with tiny buddha statues in niches, most of which are still in place. A few feet inside the walls, on either side, stand L-shaped sutra cabinets donated by the emperor Yingzong, Zhu Qizhen, in 1462.[8] Resting on a stone platform at the rear of the hall is a large, gilded, wooden statue of the seated Shakyamuni Buddha, attended by standing figures of his disciples Ananda and Kasyapa. Along the east side of the hall, in front of the sutra cabinet, three buddhas sit on lotus thrones before dragon-topped mandalas.[9] There is a wooden altar table carved with cranes, as well as a painted drum about three feet in diameter on a wooden stand. Notable is the well-preserved decoration of the beams and ceiling panels, all done in patterns of green and yellow, with Tibetan letters written in lozenges on the ceiling. The beam decoration is early Ming in style, with large, fairly simple, stylized floral motifs, not yet showing the *xuanzi,* or "curling," style of later Ming and Qing.[10]

A small courtyard behind the Buddha Hall once gave on to the residential and administrative areas of the monastery. Formerly the abbot's quarters, this area has been converted into office space for the Cultural Travel Service. The monastery compound now ends here.

History

Zhihua Monastery was founded in the early 1440s by the eunuch Wang Zhen. The story of its establishment is bound up with his rise to power and with the emergence of eunuchs as serious contenders in the political life of Ming China.

The founder of the Ming dynasty, the Hongwu emperor Zhu Yuanzhang, recognized that in earlier dynasties, particularly the Tang and Han, eunuchs had come to play powerful roles in the government of the empire, usurping or undermining the power of emperors and Confucian officials alike. To avoid such problems in his own dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang issued rules prohibiting eunuchs from encroaching on governmental affairs, or indeed from even acquiring the literacy that would make such encroachment possible. Eunuchs were still seen as useful in the basic tasks of running the Inner Palace, but they were forbidden to have extensive contact or interaction with "outer" officials.

Later, when the Prince of Yan, Zhu Di, began his campaign to overthrow his nephew the second Ming emperor, he began to use eunuchs as secret agents, relying on their personal dependence on him to ensure their loyalty and trustworthiness.[11] Once Zhu Di became the Yongle emperor in 1402, he continued to make use of eunuchs, though keeping close control over their activities and maintaining the spirit if not the letter of his father's proscriptions. After Zhu Di's death in 1424 and the reign of his short-lived successor Zhu Gaozhi, Zhu Zhanji came to the throne in 1426 as the Xuande emperor; he not only relaxed the founder's restrictions on eunuchs, but reversed them, setting up the Inner Palace School (Neishu tang) to educate eunuchs and train them to take on administrative tasks. This school accommodated two to three hundred youths, generally about ten years old, who were taught the literary skills necessary to handle documents and accounts within the palace. The formal head of the school was a Hanlin compiler, but since the school was located within the Inner Palace its real administration was in the hands of eunuchs themselves.[12]

Wang Zhen entered the school as a young man, probably in his midtwenties. This may have given him an advantage over the other, younger pupils. Wang was from Yuzhou, west

 of Beijing, and had received some education at home before deciding to enter the eunuch corps. When he completed his training in the Inner Palace School, he was appointed tutor to the heir apparent Zhu Qizhen (b. 1427). In 1435 Zhu Qizhen became emperor, and Wang Zhen retained great influence over the boy, still only eight years old.[13]

For the first few years of Zhu Qizhen's reign as the Zhengtong emperor, Wang Zhen's power was held in check by the boy's grandmother, the Grand Empress Dowager Lady Zhang, and by the three grand secretaries Yang Shiqi, Yang Rong, and Yang Pu. Known collectively as the San Yang (Three Yangs), they had served under the Yongle emperor and developed the Grand Secretariat as the key administrative body within the government. But in the early 1440s these four individuals either died or retired, and Wang Zhen was able to assume a dominant position within Zhu Qizhen's court. Symbolic of this was Wang's action in having the iron placard erected by Zhu Yuanzhang banning eunuchs from education and participation in governmental affairs removed from display in the palace courtyard.[14]

At this time also eunuchs began to receive grants of land near the city and to endow and establish Buddhist monasteries. Prior to this there had been isolated incidents of such grants, but only now did they become widespread. One of the earliest surviving examples of such a monastery is Fahai Monastery, in the hills above Shijingshan just west of Beijing, founded by the eunuch Li Tong in 1439.[15]

The exact date of the founding of Zhihua Monastery is not clear. Wang's biography in the *Ming shi* (Official history of the Ming) puts it after the death of his grandmother in 1442. A stele, dated the ninth month of the ninth year of the Zhengtong reign (October 1444), which still stands at the monastery, says that the monastery was built between the ninth day of the first month and the first day of the third month of the same year. Liu Dunzhen rejects this as much too little time to construct such a complex and notes that Wang may have converted an existing structure, perhaps a private home, simply giving it a new name.[16] James Geiss cites two instances where eunuchs, in repairing their homes, discovered evidence that the sites had formerly been temples and then requested authorization from the emperor to restore the buildings to their former status. He also writes, "In other cases eunuchs were less circumspect; they petitioned outright to change their houses to temples."[17] Whether Wang Zhen had already established his residence and merely took the opportunity to convert it into a monastery or had a new complex built cannot finally be determined. Whatever the case, in October 1444 the emperor bestowed upon Wang's buildings the name Zhihua Chansi, Chan Monastery of Transforming Wisdom.

Even after Zhihua Monastery was founded, Wang Zhen maintained his home adjacent to it. He acted as the monastery's patron in many ways. In 1446 he moved a group of musicians, who had been serving in the Imperial Palace, into the monastery, where they accompanied the monks in their recitation of sutras and doubled as entertainers in Wang's home. This began a process that blended Tang musical traditions associated with the ancient region of Yan, where Beijing was situated, Buddhist liturgical music originating in the Song period, Ming palace tunes, and folk tunes from Wang Zhen's home district in Shanxi. These elements combined to produce a distinctive style known today as Zhihua Monastery music, performed on an ensemble of nine instruments including flutes, cymbals, gongs, and drums.[18]

Eunuch patronage of Buddhist temples and monasteries was not unprecedented. As early as the Tang dynasty, eunuchs on occasion gave grants to Buddhist institutions in the capital or in their home districts. But in the middle years of the fifteenth century, eunuch

patronage became a major element in the growth of Buddhist establishments in and around Beijing. This patronage was directly linked to the dramatic growth of eunuch influence at court and in political affairs. Eunuchs not only built or restored monasteries for themselves, but also encouraged imperial patronage of monasteries. The activities of the eunuch Xing An during the Jingtai period (1450–1456) were even more extensive than those of Wang Zhen.[19]

Eunuchs had dual motives in endowing Buddhist institutions. On the one hand, they could derive practical benefits in the form of a residence for retirement; on the other hand, they might receive spiritual support from the monks of monasteries under their patronage. Eunuchs were to be despised according to Confucian views of the sanctity of the body as received from one's parents. Accepting the mutilation of castration was an unfilial act. Termination of one's reproductive life was a further affront to the integrity of the ancestral line. Buddhism did not include such attitudes; it provided a spiritual sanctuary and solace to eunuchs in life and attended their spirits in death, taking the place of descendants they could not have.

Beyond these considerations, patronage of monasteries, whether by eunuchs, emperors, members of the literati, or merchants, served social and political interests as a means for displaying one's wealth and power. The buildings, paintings, sculpture and other objects, even musical performers deployed in the public or semipublic space of a monastery, served to glorify and legitimize the position of the patron or patrons. By intervening in an area of social life long associated with emperors and the literati elite, eunuchs asserted their own positions within the cultural order. Timothy Brook has traced the expansion of Buddhist temple patronage by local literati elites in the late Ming, but the activities of emperors and officials in the capital and elsewhere had displayed the linkage between political power and patronage of religious establishments long before this.[20] By entering into this arena of patronage, eunuchs contended for the cultural recognition of their role as serious political actors. Indeed, eunuch patronage went into the very heart of literati cultural life, as Steven Owyoung's study of the late-fifteenth-century eunuch Huang Ci shows. Huang acquired a major collection of painting and calligraphy, core art forms of the literati cultural world.[21] Wang Zhen's establishment of Zhihua Monastery should thus be viewed within the overall context of eunuch involvement in political affairs and efforts to legitimize and culturally validate their changing role.

In 1449 Wang Zhen urged the Zhengtong emperor, Zhu Qizhen, to undertake a military campaign against the Mongols, who had been raiding along the Great Wall near the capital. This proposal was opposed by many of the court officials, but in the end Wang prevailed. Historians have traditionally presented this campaign as a disaster from beginning to end. Yet there was precedent for the emperor's personally leading military expeditions in the actions of the Yongle emperor less than half a century earlier, so there may have been more justification for Wang's proposal than credited by the official historians. In any event, the emperor and his army set out from Beijing in August of 1449. After marching to Datong and some inconsequential sparring with Mongol scouts, all marred by bad weather, they began to return to the capital. Instead of following the planned route south from Datong, which would have passed near Wang Zhen's hometown on the Hebei-Shanxi border, the army headed back by a more northern route, thereby exposing itself to attack from the Mongols under Esen. This route was reportedly chosen because Wang was concerned that soldiers of the imperial forces would loot his home village and estates. The Mongols pursued the Ming column, and on the first day of September caught up with the army at Tumu, where it had camped to wait for



Figure 8.10 Portrait of Wang Zhen. Rubbing from a stele dated 1459 at the Zhihua Monastery, Beijing. Ming dynasty. Photograph: Hammond.

Wang's personal baggage train. In the ensuing debacle, much of the army was wiped out, the emperor was captured by Esen's troops, and Wang Zhen was killed.[22]

Esen held Zhu Qizhen prisoner for a year. In the meantime, to maintain the authority of the dynasty and to undermine Esen's bargaining position, the emperor's younger half-brother Zhu Qiyu was placed on the throne, and reigned as the Jingtai emperor. When Zhu Qizhen was ransomed and returned to Beijing in September 1450, he was housed in the Southern Palace and kept as a virtual prisoner. He was not restored to the throne until 1457, when a coalition of eunuchs, officials, and military leaders deposed the Jingtai emperor, who died shortly thereafter.[23]

One of Zhu Qizhen's first acts upon regaining the throne was to restore the honor of Wang Zhen, who had been held criminally responsible for the disaster at Tumu, his property seized and relations executed in 1449. Zhu Qizhen established a shrine at Zhihua Monastery to honor the memory of Wang Zhen. He also had a statue carved, erected a stele with an inscription and an image of Wang (fig. 8.10), and ordered sacrifices carried out twice a year to Wang's spirit. The stele inscription, to refute the report that Wang had been killed by his

own troops at the time of the Tumu incident, recounts that he loyally took his own life. It further records some of the honors and gifts bestowed on Wang by the emperor and notes that the emperor personally contributed to the expenses for Wang's funeral. And in 1462, as mentioned above, the emperor donated a set of Buddhist scriptures to the temple, along with a massive set of cabinets to hold them. They were placed in the main hall of the temple, the Buddha Hall, where they still stand.[24]

Imperial patronage of Zhihua Monastery continued after Zhu Qizhen's death in 1464. Liu Dunzhen refers to a placard, dating to the reign of Zhu Youtang (1488–1505), that commemorates the first abbot of the temple, Ransheng, who died in 1474 after heading the monastery for thirty years. In the second year of the Zhengde reign (1507), the second and third abbots, Jueyi and Xingdao, were named as junior lecturers at the Central Buddhist Registry and praised in the Veritable Records *(shilu)* for their competent management of the Zhihua Monastery.[25]

Patronage of the monastery was not limited to the emperors. Two bells were donated, one in 1467 by men named Chen and Fang of Beijing's Nanxin ward and one in 1497 by the "female devotee" Li Huicong of Tongzhou (present-day Tongxian). In 1577, the eunuch director of the Directorate of Ceremonies, along with several colleagues, contributed monies for the restoration of some of the monastery buildings and recorded their generosity on a stone table. And, as late as 1592, He Kan donated the incense burner that remains in front of the Buddha Hall.[26]

Even after the fall of the Ming dynasty and the consolidation of rule by the Manchu Qing dynasty in the midseventeenth century, Zhihua Monastery continued to maintain itself in its accustomed style. When an earthquake struck the capital area in 1679, some of its buildings were damaged. A wooden plaque found in the ceiling of the Hall of Great Compassion (Dabei tang), located behind the Buddha Hall, recorded the names of eleven individuals, monks and others, who raised money for the repairs undertaken in 1681.[27] In 1694 the fifteenth abbot of the temple, Yong Qian, published *Yinyue qiangpu* (A musical manual), a book on the music of Zhihua Monastery; unfortunately, that book has not survived.[28]

The temple's fortunes changed dramatically in 1742, when Shen Tingfang, a censor at the court of the Qianlong emperor, submitted a memorial decrying the maintenance of the shrine to Wang Zhen's memory at Zhihua Monastery. Noting that "the traitor Wang Zhen's statue occupies a majestic and lofty place, with jade pendants and brocade robes, and incense burning uninterruptedly," Shen called for the destruction of the shrine. This action was subsequently carried out. The monks at the temple, frightened that there would be further repercussions, changed the name of the building where the shrine had stood from the Hall of Great Joy (Jile dian) to the Hall of Great Compassion. They also partially defaced a stele bearing Wang's image, though they did not destroy it (see fig. 8.10).[29]

From this time forward, Zhihua Monastery seems to have fallen on hard times. Both Yu Minzhong's 1774 *Rixia jiuwen kao* (An examination of things long heard of in the capital) and Zhu Yixin's 1885 *Jingshi fangxian zhigao* (Draft gazetteer of the capital's wards and lanes) note the destruction of Wang Zhen's shrine and say nothing of the monastery's subsequent history, though both mention the monastery as still existing.[30]

The next firm information about the monastery dates to 1901. Troops of the allied army that occupied Beijing after the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion were encamped outside Zhihua Monastery. The troops broke down the exterior walls of the courtyard in front of the Buddha Hall to ease their crowding, and perhaps for security considerations as well.

By the late 1920s Zhihua Monastery was in serious economic trouble. For many years the monastery had received income from rental property in the area, but now it was forced to let out portions of the monastery compound itself. A German company rented some land behind it, and a portion of it was taken over as a primary school. Some buildings in the front courtyard were even rented out to neighborhood residents.[31]

In 1930 the monks removed the caisson ceilings from the Buddha Hall and the Hall of Great Wisdom to sell. Because the ceilings were carved of *nanmu,* a very hard wood, they could bring a good price. One was bought by coffin makers. Laurence Sickman, then a student traveling in China (subsequently curator of Asian art and director of the Nelson-Atkins Museum), purchased it from them before it was cut up, paying eight hundred silver dollars. Horace Jayne, curator of Far Eastern Art for the Philadelphia Museum of Art in the 1930s, purchased the other ceiling for his museum.[32]

About this time Liu Dunzhen carried out his site investigation at Zhihua Monastery. In the introduction to his report, he mentions that Liang Sicheng and Zhu Qiqian, directors of the Architectural Survey of China, had both recommended the monastery to him, indicating that, although it was not prospering as a religious establishment, its reputation as an excellent example of Ming architecture was already established.

From the time of the founding of Zhihua Monastery to the era of its final decline was five hundred years. For the first three hundred of these the monastery prospered, receiving patronage from the imperial court and from men and women in the capital and surrounding communities. Its abbots received honors and were often recognized by the larger Buddhist community. The monastery also became well known for its unique style of music. After the destruction in 1742 of the shrine honoring the memory of its founder, the eunuch Wang Zhen, the monastery's fortunes declined, and over the next two centuries it fell into obscurity. By the early twentieth century, it was financially troubled, forced to rent out parts of the monastery compound and sell off the ceilings from two halls. In the mid-1950s, after the Communist government came to power, Zhihua Monastery ceased functioning as a religious institution altogether. Though officially classed as a protected cultural relic, it was closed to the public and used as a storehouse.

The rise and fall of Zhihua Monastery was directly influenced by the political situation at the imperial court and its governmental successors. As long as there was imperial patronage of the monastery, it prospered, despite the questionable honor of its founder. But when Wang Zhen was posthumously purged in the early years of the Qianlong era, the monastery as a whole suffered the consequences. It would remain for another change of policy at the central governmental level, following the victory of the Communist-led revolution, to reverse the fortunes of Zhihua Monastery again.

Restoration

After the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949, Zhihua Monastery remained open as a monastery for a few years in the early 1950s, with the primary school still operating in some of the rear buildings. The monks continued to perform funerals, for which their music was deemed especially desirable. In 1954, the Beijing yinyue yanjiuhui (Beijing Buddhist Music Association) was formed to study the music of the monastery.

The following year, as part of a government policy of consolidation and secularization,

which relocated monks at smaller monasteries to larger establishments or returned them to lay life, the last six monks living at Zhihua Monastery departed, and it ceased to function as a Buddhist religious institution. These monks and several others who had left the temple earlier continued to live in Beijing, some as monks at the Guangji (Vast Succor) Monastery, headquarters of the All-China Buddhist Federation, others as private citizens. From time to time, they were able to meet and practice their music. In 1988 nine former monks from Zhihua Monastery were still living in Beijing. Under the sponsorship of the Beijing Buddhist Association and the Beijing Buddhist Music Association, they made a recording of the Yankou (Flaming-Mouth) Sutra, a funeral sutra long identified with the monastery (for more on this sutra, see Daniel Stevenson's chapter on the *shuilu fahui*).[33] In 1992, a group of six young men were recruited from the area of Wang Zhen's hometown of Yuzhou, on the Hebei-Shanxi border. According to Sun Suhua, director of the Beijing Zhihua Monastery Musical Troupe, musical traditions from the Ming period have been continued among the local population in this area. They have preserved the tunes and instrumentation of Wang Zhen's time that were incorporated into the performance style and repertoire of the monastery. These young men joined the remaining five monks (as of the summer of 1995) and are being trained to carry on the musical legacy of Zhihua Monastery. They have performed on Chinese television and radio and have begun to travel overseas as well.[34]

In 1957, the Beijing Municipal Government undertook some restoration work on the exteriors of buildings in Zhihua Monastery. This was carried out by craftsmen who had worked for the Imperial Palace (before 1926) or for various monasteries. (Two of these craftsmen, Bai Yanhai and Meng Youxin, were involved in the restoration undertaken in the 1980s.)

In 1961, Zhihua Monastery was one of 180 sites throughout China declared important cultural relics under state protection by the State Council.[35] When the Cultural Revolution broke out in 1966, the compound was closed. Some of its statues were destroyed, but otherwise it seems to have come through this turbulent period without serious loss. During this time, the monastery served as a storehouse for sculpture and various objects removed from other Buddhist or Daoist monasteries in the area; some of these works remain at Zhihua Monastery today.

After the end of the Cultural Revolution, the death of Mao Zedong, and the ascendance of Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s, China began to reassess its cultural heritage. The cultural relics preservation system, inoperative from the mid-1960s, was reactivated. A new attitude toward China's cultural legacy, particularly to the physical remains of that legacy, began to be articulated, in many ways returning to the perspective of the 1950s. Writing in 1986, Qi Yingtao summarized it this way: "The purpose of protecting ancient architecture is to preserve the accomplishments of the working people of ancient times in architecture, engineering, and fine arts, putting them to use for the present, so that as the people undertake historical materialistic and patriotic education they will be of use."[36]

In 1982, an additional 60 sites were added to the list of cultural relics protected under the authority of the State Council, bringing the total to 242; of those, 24 were in Beijing Municipality.[37] At the same time, the Beijing Municipal Cultural Relics Bureau began planning the restoration of a number of buildings under its jurisdiction. Listed as a national cultural relic, Zhihua Monastery comes under this bureau's administrative control. The Zhihua Monastery Cultural Relics Preservation Group was set up, with Yang Wenshu as director.

Aside from the state and municipal cultural relics bureaus, other organizations are restoring traditional Chinese buildings in the Beijing area. The All-China Buddhist Federation,

 for example, is responsible for Fayuan Monastery and Guangji Monastery, which houses its own headquarters. The Wanshou (Longevity) Monastery has been restored as the Beijing Art Museum. The China Daoist Association maintains the Baiyun (White Cloud) Temple. All such work is supervised, in theory, by the State Cultural Relics Bureau.

The decision to restore Zhihua Monastery was based on its value as the best-preserved example of Ming architecture outside the Imperial Palace surviving in Beijing. The use of Zhihua Monastery to typify Ming architecture is demonstrated in Qi Yingtao's *Zenyang jianding gu jianzhu* (How to appraise ancient architecture), wherein the monastery is cited repeatedly for everything from the floor plan of the Hall of Great Wisdom to the beams of the Buddha Hall.[38] Wu Menglin and Xu Ziqiang, in their summary of the characteristics of Beijing's cultural relics, write: "As for the early-Ming architectural style preserved intact at the Zhihua Monastery . . . it can truly be said there is more beauty than the eye can hold."[39]

A budget for the restoration work at Zhihua Monastery was established in 1985, with a projected figure of 800,000 *renminbi* (about U.S.$216,000). An initial allocation of 200,000 *renminbi* (about $54,000) was made to cover the first phase of the work, encompassing the first courtyard and its surrounding buildings.

A contract was made with the Beijing Number One Architectural Restoration Company to undertake the work. This organization draws on the expertise of the architecture department at Qinghua University and employs experts and students from Beijing University, People's University, the Central Academy of Fine Arts, and other schools and specialist groups. The company employs several crews of trained craftsmen and laborers. Some of them had worked on architectural restoration work in the 1950s; some were new to this endeavor. A workshop at the Wanshou Monastery produced small-scale wooden models of many buildings for use in lieu of architectural drawings. Restoration work is guided by classic texts, such as the Song-dynasty guide to construction, *Yingzao fashi,* and modern manuals, such as Qi Yingtao's *Protection and Restoration of Ancient Chinese Architecture.*

Initial work at Zhihua Monastery began in the spring of 1986 and continued through the fall of the next year. In addition to the cleaning and repair of the exteriors of the front gate, bell and drum towers, and the Gate of Transforming Wisdom, the courtyard itself was dug up for the installation of new drainage and earthquake-protection systems. The interior of the gate was entirely gutted and refitted as an exhibition hall, with photographs, books, and some objects from the monastery's history on display. It opened to the public only after the entire restoration project was completed.

In this first phase of the project, emphasis was on altering the remaining structures as little as possible, with the obvious exception of the introduction of the exhibition hall. Wherever possible, the original wooden structures were maintained, with rotted or weakened pieces cut out and replaced as accurately as possible. The original wood, especially the beams supporting the structure, was treated with preservatives and sealants to prevent further deterioration. In restoring the surfaces of the exteriors, paints of a modern composition were mixed to match the original colors. This use of modern materials will, theoretically, help preserve the wood beneath. Within the Gate of Transforming Wisdom, the exposed ceiling timbers were cleaned but not repainted, so that the original decorative patterns can be seen.

Because of fiscal constraints on the municipal government, the second installment of funding for restoration was not allocated until late 1988. Work on the second courtyard began in 1989 and continued through 1991. The third and final phase of work was carried out from

1992 through 1994. During this last period the Buddha Hall was restored, and the former abbot's quarters behind this hall were reincorporated into the monastery complex.

This last step was taken in conjunction with a reorganization of the administration of the temple complex. The Cultural Relics Preservation Group, which had overseen the restoration work, gave way to a new body that maintains the buildings and grounds and manages public access. Headquartered in the former abbot's rooms, the Cultural Relics Travel Service makes arrangements for tourist groups wishing to visit sites like Zhihua Monastery. The business card of the vice-president of the Travel Service, Zhang Xinsheng, also identifies him as museum chief of the Beijing Cultural Exchange Museum, which is, in fact, Zhihua Monastery itself.

This latest incarnation of the monastery reflects the changing realities of modern China. In the era of economic reform and market socialism, even a historical site like Zhihua Monastery must pay its own way. By operating a travel service in addition to opening the complex as a museum, and by reviving and maintaining the musical performance tradition of the monastery, the people in charge of Zhihua Monastery have found ways to "make the past serve the present" while preserving, through careful architectural restoration and the training of new musicians, the unique legacy of this quiet corner of Beijing.

Conclusions

The history of Zhihua Monastery contains many lessons for the student of Chinese society, politics, and culture. It operated from 1443 to 1955 as a Chan Buddhist establishment, yet its fate was always as much bound up with the politics of the central government as with any dynamic internal to the Buddhist religion. Even after it no longer housed monks and received worshipers, Zhihua Monastery remained important as a symbol of China's cultural heritage. Recognized as a product of the laboring people, its restoration and preservation were undertaken by a new central government intent on establishing its own political and cultural hegemony.

A site such as Zhihua Monastery can serve as the historian's analog of a geological core sample. Through the history of Zhihua Monastery one is led into an abundance of issues in Chinese history from the early Ming into contemporary times. Study of the founding of the monastery, for instance, touches on questions of the roles of eunuchs in the imperial court and the reasons eunuchs patronized Buddhist monasteries. The story of the establishment and later destruction of the shrine to Wang Zhen's memory provides insight into the power struggles between eunuchs and Confucian bureaucrats and raises the larger question of the control of historical truth and ideological hegemony in traditional China. The creation of a unique musical heritage, today tenuously preserved in the memories of a handful of old men and their apprentices, new recordings, and scholarly studies, is related to a wide range of religious and social phenomena, such as roles of funeral practices and music in the economic life of monasteries.

Turning to the modern period, the suffering of the monastery at the hands of allied occupation troops in 1901 and the selling of the two ceilings to American museums in the 1930s shed light on Western imperialism in China and its effect on the Chinese cultural heritage. The closing of the monastery in the 1950s and its transformation from a living religious establishment into a cultural relic formed part of the struggle of the Chinese revolution to redefine society. The emergence of the Cultural Relics Travel Service and the Zhihua Monastery

 Musical Troupe represents the latest response to the shifting social and economic circumstances of the rapidly modernizing and marketizing China of the 1990s. At the same time, the restoration work at Zhihua Monastery may be seen as, in a small way, part of the return to China of a sense of cultural continuity, as China reemerges into a fuller engagement with the outside world. Thorny questions such as the reinterpretation of the past to suit the needs of the present, the role of China's cultural heritage in China today, and the relationship between China and the rest of the world can take symbolic form in the absent ceilings of the Buddha Hall and the Hall of Great Wisdom.

Yang Wenshu, director of the restoration project, reflected on the fate of these objects in an interview with *Beijing ribao* on March 5, 1988: "We have valuable historical treasures that have gone far away, to other places. . . . When we consider this, it is not suitable to our tastes. But, generally speaking, what good is there in bringing up old debts? There are still a few things to be seen before our own eyes, tangible national treasures, that have not received protection they deserve." The interviewer amplifies the historical complexity of the situation by recalling a ceiling similar to those at Zhihua Monastery in a temple destroyed during the Cultural Revolution[40] and noting that "it remains to this day . . . a pile of splintered wood, while the ceilings from the Zhihua si were taken away whole and protected by foreigners. What are we to make of this?"[41]

Notes

1. Liang Sicheng, one of the founders of modern architectural history in China, developed a typology of traditional monumental timber frame buildings: vigor, from ca. 850 to 1050; elegance, from ca. 1000 to 1400; and rigidity, from ca. 1400 to 1912. He used the evolution of structural elements, such as the bracket clusters of roof supports, to illustrate the changes from one period to another, and specifically cited the Buddha Hall at Zhihua Monastery as representative of the earlier Ming period. Liang Sicheng, *A Pictorial History of Chinese Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984), 73.
2. James Geiss, "Peking under the Ming," Ph.D diss. (Princeton University, 1979), 207.
3. Liu Dunzhen, "Beiping Zhihua si Rulai dian diaocha ji" (Site investigation report on the Buddha Hall at Beiping's Monastery of Transforming Wisdom), *Zhongguo yingzao xueshe huikan* 3.3 (1934).
4. According to Liu Dunzhen, the use of black tiles for all the building roofs indicates that the monastery is of the most common, ordinary *(putong)* style in Beijing. Ibid., 16.
5. According to Liu Dunzhen, the buildings around the first and second courtyards are arranged according to the "seven hall plan" *(qi tang zhi cheng),* a system of design for Buddhist monasteries supposedly dating back to the Tang and Song dynasties. Liu suggests that the use of this seven hall plan (one hall being the gate) in the front area of the Zhihua si may be consistent with the idea that originally Wang Zhen had a small private temple here, with his residence behind it in what is now the rear area of the compound; he then expanded the temple to its larger size when he received imperial permission in 1444. Bruce Coats, however, argues that the seven hall plan was not a conscious design strategy, but a term applied retrospectively to describe, in a somewhat idealized way, the architecture of Chan monasteries in Zhejiang upon which Japanese monasteries were modeled in the thirteenth century. Coats cites the broad use of this term from the sixteenth century, with the earliest example in the latter half of the fifteenth. Bruce A. Coats, "Zen Monastic Architecture in Japan 1200–1500," Ph.D. diss. (Harvard University, 1985), 18 et seq. Thus, the inclusion of seven major buildings in the first two courtyards of the Zhihua Monastery does not necessarily indicate that this was the full extent of Wang Zhen's original monastic compound.
6. Yang Wenshu believes that the Zhihua Monastery bell is now at the bell museum at the Great Bell Temple on Beijing's northwest side.
7. When I first visited the monastery in 1986, there were two wooden models of monastic buildings, about eighteen inches in height, on the floor in the Scripture Hall. Laurence Sickman advised me in a letter that

these had formerly been part of a set mounted in the monastery's main Buddha Hall. Most of them are now in Kansas City, but these two remained behind. Sickman believed they dated from the Qianlong era, and were not part of the original design of the temple.

8. According to Yang Wenshu, the monastery library and archives were removed in the mid-1950s and are now in the possession of the Beijing Municipal Government.
9. Before the restoration of this hall a number of extraneous Buddhist and Daoist sculptures, removed from other monastic buildings in this part of the city, were stored in the Buddha Hall. These have now been moved elsewhere. The stele bearing a portrait of the monastery's founder, Wang Zhen, was stored in the hall during earlier restoration work, but it is now in the introductory historical display in the Gate of Transforming Wisdom.
10. Qi Yingtao cites the beam painting at Zhihua Monastery as his model for the Ming period. See his *Zeyang jianding gu jianzhu* (How to appraise ancient architecture) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1981), 50–53.
11. Hok-lam Chan, "The Chien-wen, Yung-lo, Hung-hsi, and Hsuan-te reigns, 1399–1445," in *The Cambridge History of China,* vol. 7: *The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644,* pt. 1, ed. Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 212–213; Robert B. Crawford, "Eunuch Power in the Ming Dynasty," *Toung Pao,* 49.3 (1961): 126–127.
12. *Ming shi* (Official history of the Ming) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 26.7765–7766.
13. L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1347–1349. Wang Chunyu and Du Wanyan, *Mingchao huan guan* (Eunuchs of the Ming dynasty) (Beijing: Zijin cheng chubanshe, 1989), 143–144.
14. Wang Qiju, *Mingdai Neige zhidu shi* (Organizational history of the Grand Secretariat in the Ming dynasty) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 73–93.
15. Geiss, "Peking under the Ming," 94–98.
16. Liu, "Beiping Zhihua si," 4–5.
17. Geiss, "Peking under the Ming," 97.
18. Interview with Kong Qin, Beijing Buddhist Music Society, June 8, 1988.
19. Marsha Weidner, "Buddhist Pictorial Art in the Ming Dynasty," in *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism 850–1850* (Lawrence, Kan.: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas; Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), 56–57.
20. Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late Ming Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).
21. Steven Owyoung, "The Formation of the Family Collection of Huang Tz'u and Huang Lin," in *Artists and Patrons: Some Social and Economic Aspects of Chinese Painting,* ed. Chu-tsung Li (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1989), 111–126.
22. For a full discussion of the campaign in its political and military dimensions see Frederick W. Mote, "The T'u-mu Incident of 1449," in *Chinese Ways in Warfare,* ed. Frank A. Kiernan, Jr., and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), 243–272.
23. Denis Twitchett and Tileman Grimm, "The Cheng-t'ung, Ching't'ai, and T'ien-shun Reigns, 1436–1464," in Mote and Twitchett, *Cambridge History of China,* 7:305–342.
24. Liu, "Beiping Zhihua si," 6. Yu Minzhong, *Rixia jiuwen kao* (An examination of things long heard of in the capital) (Reprint, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 761–762.
25. Liu, "Beiping Zhihua si," 10. Liu quotes the *Wuzong shilu* (Veritable records of the reign of Wuzong), as it was cited in *Rixia jiuwen kao,* 761.
26. Liu, "Beiping Zhihua si,"11.
27. Ibid., 8.
28. Interview with Kong Qin.
29. Liu, "Beiping Zhihua si," 7–9; Yu, *Rixia jiuwen kao*, 761–762.
30. Yu, *Rixia jiuwen kao,* 762; Zhu Yixin, *Jingshi fangxian zhigao* (Draft gazetteer of the capital's wards and lanes) (Reprint, Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1983), 107.
31. Liu, "Beiping Zhihua si," 12–15.
32. Laurence Sickman kindly provided this information in a letter dated March 6, 1987. The acquisition of the ceiling by the Philadelphia Museum was recounted in a letter from Felice Fischer, associate curator of Far Eastern Art, dated August 1988.

33. Interview with Kong Qin.
34. Interview with Sun Suhua, Beijing Zhihua Monastery Musical Troupe, June 30, 1995.
35. Wu Menglin and Xu Ziqiang, "Beijing wenwu de tedian: jiazhi, ji qi xingcheng yuanyin" (Cultural relics of Beijing: Their characteristics, evaluation, and origins), in *Beijing shi yanjiu* (Research in Beijing history) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1984), 176–185.
36. Qi Yingtao, *Zhongguo gudai jianzhu de baohu yu weixiu* (Protection and restoration of ancient Chinese architecture) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1986), 1.
37. Wu Menglin and Xu Ziqiang, "Beijing wenwu tedian," 177.
38. Qi, *Zeyang jianding gu jianzhu.*
39. Wu and Xu, "Beijing wenwu tedian," 181.
40. The Longfu (Exalted Fortune) Monastery was built in 1452–1453, in the Renshou ward on the east side of Beijing. The site is now part of the office compound of the Civil Aviation Administration of China. The ceiling is on display in the Beijing Museum of Ancient Architectures.
41. Liu Yida, "Zhihua si zaojing shizong zhi mi" (Riddle of the disappearance of the caisson ceilings from the Monastery of Transforming Wisdom), *Beijing ribao,* March 5, 1988.

Glossary

A NUMBER OF TERMS translated into English in the text are given below in Chinese. They include cloister (*yuan*), gate (*men*), hall (*dian*), hermitage (*an*), monastery (*si*), mount or mountain (*shan*), pavilion (*lou*), temple (Daoist: *gong* or *guan*), and temple (other: *miao*). Thus, Baoning Monastery is listed as Baoning si, Mount Wutai as Wutai shan, and so on.

ai'lian 愛戀
Ai Qimeng 艾啓蒙
Amituofo 阿彌陀佛
anju 安居
An Shifeng 安世鳳
Anyuan men 安遠門
anzhi foxiang 安置佛像
axiuluo 阿修羅
Ayuwang si 阿育王寺

Baiyun guan 白雲觀
banghe Chan 棒喝禪
Ban Gu 班固
Baochi Jizong 寶持濟總
Bao'en si 報恩寺
Baoguang dian 寶光殿
Baohua shan 寶華山
Baoli si 寶歷寺
Baoming si 保明寺
Baoning si 寶寧寺
Bao shengfo, wufang 寶勝佛，五方
Baozhi 寶誌
Beijing 北京
Beijing yinyue yanjiu hui 北京音樂研究會
benzun 本尊
Bianguang 習光
Bianjing 汴京
Bian Wenjin 邊文進
biao 表
biaobai 表白
Binyang 賓陽
Bishu shanzhuang 避暑山莊
Bi Xizhi 畢熙志
Biyan lu 碧巖錄
Biyun si 碧雲寺
Bore an 般若庵
bu li wenzi 不離文字，不立文字

Cai Bian 蔡卞
Cai Jing 蔡京
Cai Xiang 蔡襄
Cantong an 參同庵
can xiu Chan jing 參修禪淨
Caoxi 曹溪
Chagi (C. Zikui) 仔夔
chan 禪

Chang'an 長安
Changlu Zongze 長盧宗賾
Changzhou 常州
chanhui 懺悔
Chanyuan qinggui 禪苑清規
Chaoyang men 潮陽門
Chaoyue Jingnuo 超越靜諾
Chaozhou 潮州
Chengde 承德
Cheng Hao 程顥
chenghuang 城隍
Chengzong 成宗
Chen Heng 陳亨
Chen Hongmou 陳宏謀
Chenhua 晨華
Chidi pusa 持地菩薩
Chiwon (C. Zhihuan) 智還
chongding 重訂
Chongshan Chan si 崇善禪寺
Chongshan si 崇善寺
Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chae'ŭi (C. *Tiandi mingyang shuilu zhaiyi*) 天地冥陽水陸齋儀
chouxie men 酬謝門
Chugam Yusa (C. Zhuan Youshi) 竹菴猷師
Chunyang dian 純陽殿
Chushi Fanqi 楚石梵琦
Chu Suiliang 褚遂良
ci 辭，詞
cibei daochang chanfa 慈悲道場懺法
cibei sanmei shui chan 慈悲三昧水懺
Cisheng 慈聖
Cishou Huaishen 慈受懷深
Ciyun Zunshi 慈雲遵式
Congding 從定

Dabei tang 大悲堂
Da'de 大德
Dadian Baotong 大顛寶通
Dadu 大都
Dafu lingjiu si 大孚靈鷲寺
Daguan Zhenke 達觀真可
Da huguo shengguang yongming si 大護國聖光永明寺
Daihai 岱海
Damo ji 達磨忌
daochang 道場
daoxue 道學
Daoyan 道衍
Daoying 道英
Daoyuan 道元
da shenwang 大神王
dashi 大師，大士
Datong 大同
Da Xiantong si 大顯通寺
Daxie 大歇
Daxiong baodian 大雄寶殿
Daxiong dian 大雄殿
Dayuan jushi 大圓居士
Dazhi dian 大智殿
dazhong 大衆
dian 顛
difu 地府
dingxiang 頂相
diyu 地獄
Dizang pusa 地藏菩薩
Dolonnor (C. Duolun) 多倫
Donggula (C. Tanggula) 唐古拉
Dong Qichang 董其昌
Dongshan 東山
Du Fu 杜甫
Dunhuang 敦煌
Duofu si 多福寺
dushen 瀆神

egui 餓鬼
Emei shan 峨嵋山

Fafang 法舫
Fahai Chan si 法海禪寺
Fahai si 法海寺
Fahua sanmei 法華三昧
Fajie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiuzhai yigui 法界聖凡水陸勝會修齋儀軌
Falun baochan 法輪寶懺
Famen si 法門寺
Fan 范
fan (fanfu) 凡(凡夫)
Fan Chengda 范成大
fang yankou 放燄口

Fang yankou shishi egui fa 放飲口施食餓鬼法
fangzhang 方丈
faqi men 發器門
fashi 法師
Fawang 法王
fayuan 發願
Fayuan si 法源寺
Fazang 法藏
feibai 飛白
fenben 粉本
Fo 佛
foguang 佛光
fotu 佛土
Foyin Liaoyuan 佛印了元
Fozhao 佛照
Fozu tong ji 佛祖統紀
fudao 婦道
Fudeng 福登
Fu Shan 傅山
Fushi Chanyuan 伏獅禪院
Fushi Zhiyuan Chanshi yulu 伏獅祇園禪師語錄
futian 福田
futu 符圖

gangyao 剛要
Gaofeng Yuanmiao 高峰原妙
Gaoxian 高閑
Gao Yiyong 高以永
Gaozong 高宗
Gaozuo si 高座寺
gequ 歌曲
Gequ ming jing 歌曲名經
Gong (Ming, Prince) 恭王
gong'an 公案
gongde 功德
Gonglung (C. Youning si) 佑寧(寺)
gongtian yi 供天儀
Gongxian 鞏縣
gongyang 供養
gu 故
guan 觀
Guangdong 廣東
Guanghui chan si 廣慧禪寺
guang jian fahui 廣薦法會
Guangji si 廣濟寺
Guangzhou 廣州
guanxiang 觀想
Guanxiu 貫休
Guanyin 觀音
Guan Yu 關羽
guhun 孤魂
gui 鬼，閨
Guihua 歸化
Guishan Lingyou 溈山靈佑
guishen 鬼神
Guoqing si 國清寺

Haitian 海天
Halima 哈立麻
Hangzhou 杭州
Hanshan 寒山
Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清
Han Yu 韓愈
Hanyue Fazang 漢月法藏
He Kan 郝瞰
Hebei 河北
Henan 河南
Henmi Baiei 逸見梅榮
Hengshan 衡山
Hengzhou 衡州
Hongjue Guoshi 弘覺國師
Hongli 弘歷
Hong Mai 洪邁
Hongwu 洪武
Hongxi 洪熙
Hongzhao 弘肇
Hongzhi 宏智
Hou Dongceng 侯洞曾
Hou Jiceng 侯濟曾
Hou Xun 侯洵
Hou Yan 侯演
Huaisu 懷素
hua lama 畫喇嘛
Huang Ci 黃賜
Huanghua fang 黃華坊
huanglu zhai 黃籙齋
Huangtaiji 皇太極
Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅

huashi men 畫式門
huatou 話頭
Huayan jing 華嚴經
Huayuan si 花園寺
Huguo Chanshi 護國禪師
Huiben 會本
Huideng si 慧燈寺
huiguang 慧光
huixiang 迴向
huixiang wen 迴向文
Huizhao 慧照
Huizong 徽宗
Hu Rihua 胡日華

Jehol (C. Rehe) 熱河
Jiading 嘉定
Jian'an si 健安寺
Jian'an zhi si 健安之寺
Jiangsu 江蘇
Jiangtian si 江天寺
Jianguo men 建國門
Jiang Yuanliang 蔣元亮
Jiang Zicheng 蔣子成
jiao 醮，教
Jiaping Jiexiu 嘉平戒秀
Jiaqing 嘉慶
Jiaxing 嘉興
jiehua 界畫
jiejie 結界
Jieshi 介石
Jiexiu 戒秀
Jifu Zukui 濟符祖揆
Jile dian 極樂殿
Jin (Ming, Prince of) 晉王
Jin Dashou 金大受
jingchan men 經懺門
jingdao 淨道
jing daochang 淨道場
Jingde chuandeng lu 景德傳燈錄
Jingduan 淨端
Jingshi fangxiang 京師坊巷志稿
Jingtai 景泰
jingtu tan 淨土壇
jinguangming chanfa 金光明懺法
Jingwei 靜維
Jingyan 淨嚴
Jinping mei 金瓶梅
Jinshan 金山
jinshi 進士
Jinsu shan 金粟山
Jinsu si 金粟寺
Jixiang faxi dian 吉祥法喜殿
Jizong Xingche 季總行徹
Jōjin 成尋
Juewei shan 崛㠠山
Jueyi 覺義
Jueyuan si 覺苑寺
Juyong guan 居庸關

Kaifeng 開封
kaiyan 開眼
Kaiyuan 開元
Kangxi 康熙
kesi 緙絲
kou 口
kuang 狂
Kunming 昆明

Laifu 來復
Ledu 樂都
Lengyan si 楞嚴寺
li 里，理
Li (Ming, Empress Dowager) 李
lian 蓮
lian'ai 戀愛
Liang 梁
Lianghai Rude 量海如德
Liang huang chan 梁皇懺
Liang Sicheng 梁思成
Li Gonglin 李公麟
Li Huicong 李惠聰
lijing 禮敬
ling 靈
Linggu si 靈谷寺
Lingyan 靈嚴
Lingyin si 靈隱寺
Linji 臨濟
Linji Yixuan 臨濟義玄
Linquan 林泉
linshi 臨時

Lin Zhao'en 林兆恩
Li Tieguai 李鐵拐
Li Tong 李童
Li Tongxuan 李通玄
Liu Dunzhen 劉敦楨
Liu Fang 劉芳
Liu Haichan 劉海蟾
Liu Shanzhang 劉善長
Liu Tiemo 劉鐵磨
Liu Youding 劉有定
Li Yaofu 李堯夫
Lizong 理宗
lohan (luohan) 羅漢
long 龍
Longguo dian 隆國殿
Longmen 龍門
Longyin 龍隱
lu 陸
Lu'an 潞安
luan 鸞
Lumicang hutong 祿米倉胡同
luohan tang 羅漢堂
Luya shan 蘆芽山

Ma (Ming, Empress) 馬
Mazu 馬組
Meixi 梅溪
Menggui 夢龜
Meng Ji 孟繼
Mi'an 謐庵
miao 廟
Miaodao 妙道
Miaofeng 妙峰
Miaogao zhuangyan dian 妙高莊嚴殿
Miaohui 妙惠，妙慧
Miaozhan an 妙湛菴
Mi Fu 米芾
mijiao 密教
Ming 明
Ming shi 明史
mingwang 明王
mingyang 冥陽
Mingzhou 明州
Miyun Yuanwu 密雲圜悟
Moshan Liaoran 末山了然

Muchen Daowen 木陳道文
Muqi 牧溪
Muyun Tongmen 木雲通門

Nanjing 南京
Nanmo Amituofo 南無阿彌陀佛
nanmu 楠木
Nanquan Puyuan 南泉普願
Nanyue 南越
Nanyue Huairang 南岳懷讓
neishu tang 內書堂
neitan 內壇
nian 念
nianfo 念佛
nianfo qi 念佛七
nianhua Shijia 拈華釋迦
niepan tang 涅槃堂
Ningbo 寧波
Ningzong 寧宗
Nurhaci (C. Nuerhachi) 努爾哈赤

Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修
Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭

pailou 牌樓
paiwei 牌位
Pang De 龐德
panjiao 判教
Peng Shaosheng 彭紹升
Phagspa (C. Basiba) 八思巴
Pilu si 毗盧寺
Pom'ŭm ch'aek chip (C. *Fanyin ce ji*) 梵音冊集
pudu 普渡
pudu dazhai 普渡大齋
pugong 普供
Pusading si 菩薩頂寺
Putuo shan 普陀山
Putuozongcheng (miao) 普陀宗乘廟
Puxian 普賢

Qianlong 乾隆
qielan shen 伽蘭神
Qing 清
Qinghai 青海

Qingliang shan zhi 清涼山志
qingzan 慶讚
qi tang zhi cheng 七堂之稱
que 闕
Qutan si 瞿曇寺
Qutan si dian 瞿曇寺殿

Ransheng 然勝
Renhe 任和
Rixia jiuwen kao 日下舊聞考
ru kongmen 入空門
Rulai 如來
Rulai dabao fawang xitian dashan zizai fo 如來大寶法王西天大善自在佛
Rulai dian 如來殿
Ruo'an Tongwen 箬庵通問
ruyi 如意
Ruyi guan 如意館

Sanluo 三羅
Sansheng ge 三聖閣
San Yang 三楊
Sengyou 僧祐
Sezhe sanluo 色哲三羅
Shaanxi 陝西
Shancai 善財
Shanci Tongji 山茨通際
Shangqing gong 上清宮
shangtang 上堂
Shang Xi 商喜
Shang Yi 尚義
shanmen 山門
Shanxi 山西
Shanyin (Ming, Prince of) 山陰王
shen 身，神
Shen (Ming, Prince of) 瀋王
sheng 聖
Sheng'an 省庵
Sheng'an Shixian 省庵實顯
Sheng'an si 聖安寺
Shengci renshou 聖慈仁壽
Sheng Jun 盛君
Sheng Yunzhen 盛惲貞
Shengzhuang 聖幢
shenjiao 神教
shenni 神尼
Shen Qiqin 沈綺琴
Shen Tingfang 沈廷芳
Shenyang 沈陽
Shenyi 神一
Shenying 神應
shi 使
Shiche Tongsheng 石車通剩
Shide 拾得
Shi Hao 史浩
shijian 世間
Shijia Yeshi 釋迦也失
Shijiazhuang 石家莊
shilu 實錄
Shimen zhengtong 釋門正統
Shiqi Tongyun 石奇通雲
shishi 施食
Shishi tonglan 施食通覽
Shitao 石陶
shiyi 事儀
shizhu 施主
Shizi Duan 獅子端
shou 壽
Shoulengyan jing 首楞嚴經
Shuanglin si 雙林寺
Shuangta si 雙塔寺
shuilu 水陸
Shuilu daochang tonglun 水陸道場通論
Shuilu dazhai ling ji ji 水陸大齋靈迹記
shuilu fahui 水陸法會
Shuilu falun baochan 水陸法輪寶懺
shuilu hua 水陸畫
shuilu tang / yuan 水陸堂，院
Shuilu yigui 水陸儀軌
Shuilu yigui huiben 水陸儀軌會本
Shuilu yiwen 水陸儀文
shuji men 書記門
Shunzhi 順治
Si De 四德
Sima Qian 司馬遷
Song 宋
Song gu he xiang ji 頌古合響集
Song kai 宋楷
Song Lian 宋濂
Sun Jianxiao 孫簡蕭

Sun Maoshi 孫茂時
Su Shi 蘇軾
Suzhou 蘇州

Taer si 塔爾寺
Taihuai 臺懷
Tai Puzhi 太樸之
Taiyuan 太原
Taizong 太宗
Taizu 太祖
Tandu an 檀度菴
Tang 唐
Tang Hou 湯垕
tangsi men 堂司門
tantu 壇圖
Tao (Mme.) 陶氏
Tayuan si 塔院寺
tian 天
Tiandi mingyang shuilu xiefa 天地冥陽水陸寫法
Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen 天地冥陽水陸儀文
Tiandi mingyang shuilu zhaiyi 天地冥陽水陸齋儀
tianhua 天花
Tiantai 天臺
Tiantai shan 天臺山
Tiantong Cixing 天童慈行
Tiantong si 天童寺
Tianwang dian 天王殿
Tianzang pusa 天藏菩薩
Tongxian 通縣
Tongzhou 通州
tudi shen 土地神
Tuiweng Hongchu 退翁弘儲
Tumu 土木

Ubasi (C. Wobaxi) 渥巴錫

waitan 外壇
wan 萬
Wanfa guiyi dian 萬法歸一殿
Wanfa zongyuan 萬法宗源
Wanfo ge 萬佛閣
Wan Fuqing 宛福清
wang 王
Wang Fu 王弗
wanghun 亡魂
wangling 亡靈
Wang Mang 王莽
Wang Qin 王勤
Wang Shu 王恕
Wangu si 萬固寺
Wang Xizhi 王羲之
Wang Zhen 王振
Wanli 萬歷
Wanru Tongwei 萬如通微
wanshou 萬壽
Wanshou si 萬壽寺
Wanxian 宛仙
wei 位
Weiji Xingzhi 維極行致
wengao 文稿
wenhai shijiang 文海詩江
Wenshu 文殊
Wenxin 文心
wenzi Chan 文字禪
Wu Daozi 吳道子
wugong 五供
Wu (Liang, Emperor) 武
Wuliang shou fo 無量壽佛
Wumen sizhong dizi shi 吳門四種弟子詩
wuse haoguang 五色毫光
Wutai shan 五臺山
Wu Yue 吳説
Wu Zetian 武則天
wuzhe fahui 無遮法會
Wuzhun Shifan 無準師範
Wuzong 武宗

xi 蓆
xia 匣
Xia Meinan 夏美南
xian 仙
xiang 像
xiangdeng 香燈
xiangdeng men 香燈門
xianghua gongyang 香華供養
xiangshi 像式
xianqiao 仙橋

xianqiu 仙鷘
Xiantong si 顯通寺
Xianzong 憲宗
Xiao gugong 小故宮
Xiaowen 孝文
Xiaozong 孝宗
xiatang 下堂
Xia Wenyan 夏文彥
Xia Yunyi 夏允彝
Xie Ju 謝矩
Xihuang si 西黄寺
Xing An 興安
Xingdao 性道
Xingduan 行端
xingshi 行事
xingshu 行書
Xining 西寧
Xiongsheng an 雄聖庵
Xiuzhou 秀州
Xiyan Liaohui 西巖了慧
Xu (Ming, Empress) 徐
Xuande 宣德
xuanhe 玄鶴
xuanzi 旋字
Xuanzong 玄宗
Xu biqiuni zhuan 續比丘尼傳
Xuedou si 雪竇寺
Xumifushou (miao) 須彌福壽廟

Yang E 楊鄂
Yang Pu 楊溥
Yang Rong 楊榮
Yang Sheng 楊升
Yang Shiqi 楊士奇
Yanhua ji 巖華集
Yan Hui 顏輝
yanjing daochang 嚴淨道場
yankou 燄口
yanshi 嚴師
yanshi daochang 巖飾道場
yanshou tang 延壽堂
Yanxiu 彥修
Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿
Yao Guangxiao 姚廣孝
Yao Huming 姚胡明
Yaojiang 姚江
Yaoshi rulai benyuan jing 藥師如來本願經
Yao Weiyu 姚媯餘
Yao Wenhan 姚文瀚
Yaqi 亞栖
Yigong 義公
Yigong Chaoke 義恭朝珂
yigui 儀軌，儀規
Yihe yuan 頤和園
Yijian zhi 夷堅志
Yikui Chaochen 一揆超琛
yinggong 應供
Yingshen 應深
Yinguang 印光
yingxian 應顯，應現
Yingxiang ji 影響集
Yingzao fashi 營造法式
Yingzong 英宗
Yinyuan 隱元
Yinyue qiangpu 音樂腔譜
Yirun Yuanhong 儀潤源洪
yiwen 儀文
Yonghe gong 雍和宮
Yongle 永樂
Yongle gong 永樂宮
Yongming si 永明寺
Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽
Yong Qian 永乾
Yongxi 永熙
Yongzheng 雍正
Yongzuo si 永祚寺
yousi shu 游絲書
You Ying 尤瑛
Yuan Jue 袁桷
Yuan Qi 袁琦
Yuansou Xingduan 元叟行端
Yuanxi 元熙
Yuebo shan 月波山
Yuejiang Zhengyin 月江正印
yujia 瑜伽
yulanpen 盂蘭盆
yulu 語錄
Yu Minzhong 于敏中

Yunqi fahui 雲棲法彙
Yunqi Zhuhong 雲棲袾宏
yunxiang 運想
yun xin xiang 運心想
yuting 浴亭
Yuzhou 蔚州
Yuzuo lou 御座樓

Zaisheng 再生
zan 贊
Zang dian 藏殿
Zanning 贊寧
Zaoban chu 造辦處
zaojing 藻井
Zengxiu jiaoyuan qinggui 增修教苑清規
Zexin si 澤心寺
zhai 齋
zhaigong men 齋供門
zhaizhu 齋主
zhangfu 丈夫
Zhangjia hutuketu 章嘉呼圖克圖
Zhang Jizhi 張即之
Zhang Nanben 張南本
Zhang Shangying 張商英
Zhang Xiaoxiang 張孝祥
Zhang Xu 張旭
Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠
Zhang Youyu 張有譽
Zhao Lian 趙廉
Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫
zhaoqing 召請
Zhaozhou 趙州
Zhejiang 浙江
zheng 正
Zhengde 正德
zheng dian 正殿
Zhenghe 政和
zhengming shu 證明書
Zheng Shao 鄭杓
Zhengtong 正統
Zheng Yingfang 鄭應房
Zheng Yundu 鄭雲渡
Zhenji si 真寂寺
zhentang 真堂
Zhenyi Xiyuan 真益熙願
Zhenzong 真宗
Zhiguo 智果
Zhihua dian 智化殿
Zhihua men 智化門
Zhihua si 智化寺
Zhipan 志磐
Zhiweng 直翁
Zhiyuan Xinggang 祗園行剛
zhizha men 誌劄門
Zhongduan 種端
zhongyin 中陰
Zhongyu 種玉
Zhou (Ming, Empress Dowager) 周
Zhou Wenju 周文矩
Zhuang (Ming, Prince) 莊王
zhuangyan 莊嚴
zhuanlun zang 轉輪藏
Zhu Changluo 朱常洛
Zhu Di 朱棣
zhufa 主法
Zhu Gang 朱棡
Zhuhong 袾宏
zhujing tan 諸經壇
Zhu Junzha 朱俊柵
Zhu Min 朱敏
Zhu Qiqian 朱啓鈐
Zhu Qiyu 朱祁鈺
Zhu Qizhen 朱祁鎮
Zhu Xi 朱熹
Zhu Xiaoyong 朱效鏞
Zhu Yixin 朱一新
Zhu Youtang 朱祐堂
Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋
Zhu Yunwen 朱允炆
Zhu Zhongxuan 朱鐘鉉
Zibo Zhenke 紫柏真可
Zikui 仔夔
Zilin jushi 子麟居士
Zizai 自在
zizan 自贊
zong 宗
Zongjian 宗鑑
Zonglun 總論

Zongxiao 宗曉
Zongze 宗賾
zu 祖
Zunjiao si 尊教寺
Zunshi 遵式
zuo 座
zuofa 作法
zuofa men 作法門
zushi 祖師
zutang 祖堂
Zutang ji 祖堂記
Zuxun 祖訓

Contributors

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Index